



NOSC TD 140

**Technical Document 140** 

## SOLAR H-ALPHA FLARE ATLAS BASED ON NOSC VIDEOMETER DATA

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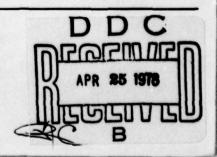
PE Argo W Loomis

5 January 1978

Prepared for Air Force Geophysics Laboratory Bedford, MA 01730

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NAVAL OCEAN SYSTEMS CENTER SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92152





#### NAVAL OCEAN SYSTEMS CENTER, SAN DIEGO, CA 92152

### AN ACTIVITY OF THE NAVAL MATERIAL COMMAND

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**HL BLOOD** 

Commander

**Technical Director** 

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

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Released by Dr JH Richter, Head EM Propagation Division Under authority of JD Hightower, Head Environmental Sciences Department

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

A solar flare measuring system, developed by NOSC and employing semiautomated computer-video techniques, was used in a flare patrol network to study fine temporal structure during optical flares and to afford direct comparison with both radio and x-ray data. Flare data collected between January 1971 and June 1974 are presented, comprising both a summary of peak area, brightness, and times as well as more complete time history profiles on an event-by-event basis.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Solar  $H_{\alpha}$  flare measurements are commonly used as the reference point for solar geophysical studies, even though a review of the collected  $H_{\alpha}$  data reveals wide discrepancies between observations. Therefore, the Naval Ocean Systems Center has developed a digital solar flare measuring system that employs semiautomated computer-video techniques for use in flare patrol networks. The "videometer" has made possible the study of fine temporal structure during optical flares and offers direct comparison with both radio and x-ray data. Periodically from early 1971, two systems were run simultaneously; the series included a separation test in which one system was moved to Hawaii (from San Diego). During these operations, 150 flare observations were catalogued, with 23 being seen by both systems. Most of the events observed have been small (subflares), although a 3B flare observed on 24 January 1971 will also be shown.

This document is a compendium of the flare data collected between January 1971 and June 1974. A summary of the peak area, brightness, and times is given in table 1; more complete time history profiles on an event-by-event basis are displayed in the ensuing pages. These profiles are the major reason for this report.

#### VIDEOMETER SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

The videometer system has been described in detail elsewhere,  $^{3,4}$  so it will be discussed only briefly here. The system consists of a 5-inch telescope, a high-resolution (945-line) TV system, and associated electronics, an 8K digital minicomputer, and the necessary readout devices. The overall system concept is diagrammed in fig 1; an artist's conception of the system is shown in fig 2. The tracking telescope,  $0.8\text{\AA}$  H<sub> $\alpha$ </sub> hybrid filter, and closed-circuit television system form one unit (which is positioned at an appropriate viewing location). A computer, interface, stripchart recorder, and video monitor form the second unit, which, along with the input/output teletype, is housed in a building near the telescope site.

#### **ACTIVE REGION MEASUREMENTS**

The videometer digitizes the brightness levels of picture elements in an array taken within a rectangular region, usually enclosing an active region (see fig 3). Each element in the array covers approximately one millionth of the solar disc. The brightness levels can range from 1 to 64, with 1 being a very dark sunspot and 64 set higher than the highest expected flare brightness. The elements at each brightness level (1-64) are summed so that the stored data are in an "area" (number of points)-versus-brightness-level format.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratory TR 73-0181, The Construction and Testing of a Pair of Matched Solar Telescopes, 14 March 1973

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>NELC TR 1890, Solar Videometer: An Automatic Solar Flare Identification and Classification System, by PE Argo et al, 23 August 1973

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ward, FR, et al, Solar Flare Observations from a Pair of Matched Instruments, Solar Physics, 31, p 131–141, 1973

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Argo, PE, et al, Analysis of Digital  $H_{\alpha}$  Solar Flare Measurements, International Symposium Solar-Terrestrial Physics, Sao Paulo, Brazil, June 1974.

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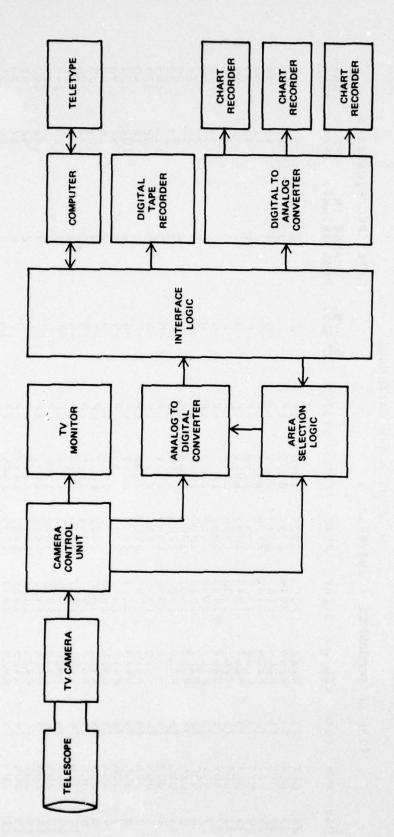


Figure 1. Solar flare data acquisition system.

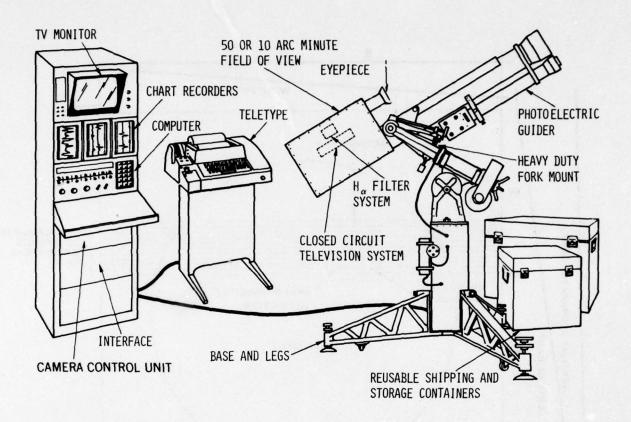


Figure 2. Solar flare digital videometer system.

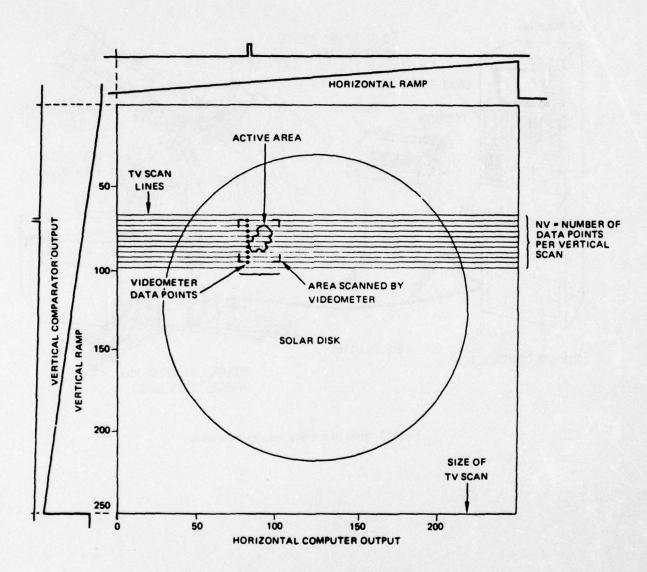


Figure 3. Videometer scan of TV output.

This area-versus-brightness curve is called a "brightness distribution." Notice that this technique discards all positional information within the region. A region which contains a minimum of solar features typically will have a range of brightness values from three to five units wide (see fig 4a), with the largest number of points (area) existing in two or three brightness levels. An active region will have a wider distribution (fig 4a), although the largest number of elements will again lie in two or three brightness levels. The brightness levels below this "average brightness" are indicative of the filamentary and sunspot features, while the higher brightness levels correspond to the plage region. A flare, viewed optically, is typically seen as an increase in the maximum brightness level, as well as enhanced areas in the brighter plage regions. Figure 4b shows data from the system collected at the peak of a flare on 12 March 1972. The dashed curve is the pre-event brightness distribution and is used as the reference level from which the flare data are measured. The brightness distribution of the region at flare maximum falls beneath the solid line in the figure, with the actual flare defined as the increased area in the brighter (higher) levels. Time histories for optical flaring events are then readily available by performing the subtraction of the preflare distribution from the flaring distribution, as indicated above for each measurement. By varying the lowest bin used in the actual flare area, subtractions can look at the strictly energetic portion (higher brightness levels) or include the more diffuse and less bright flaring region (lower flare brightened levels; fig 4b). Figure 5 shows the time variations of the distribution from the active region, which gave a 3B flare on 24 January 1971.

#### **DATA DESCRIPTION**

Table 1 gives a summary of the flare data recorded by the videometer systems, spanning a time range from early 1971 through June 1974. During this period the videometer systems were undergoing design development and so the data cannot strictly be intercompared throughout. The 24 January 1971 data were taken during the very early design phase, and must stand alone. The data from 5-7 May 1972 were taken with both systems from the La Posta Astrogeophysical Observatory at Campo, CA; in this same series, the data from 8-18 May 1972 were with the videometer separated, system B being located in Saugus, CA. Between May and October 1972, the systems were improved by installing new, more sensitive video amplifiers, and so the following data (October 1972 - June 1974) also must be considered separately. The shape of the time histories should be comparable throughout the whole data set-it is the actual values that cannot be intercompared. The upper and lower flare areas indicated in the table are those corresponding to the higher and lower thresholds (bin level), respectively, used in the distribution subtraction process. If the numbers are the same, it indicates that the pre-event active region did not show enough contrast to the distinguished two thresholds. The profiles are all presented with respect to the lower threshold.

#### TIME PROFILES

The time profile plots (fig 6 and beyond) contain both the flare "area" and the peak brightness variations. The area scale is on the left and the peak brightness (or "peak") is on the right; the area curve is above the peak curve.

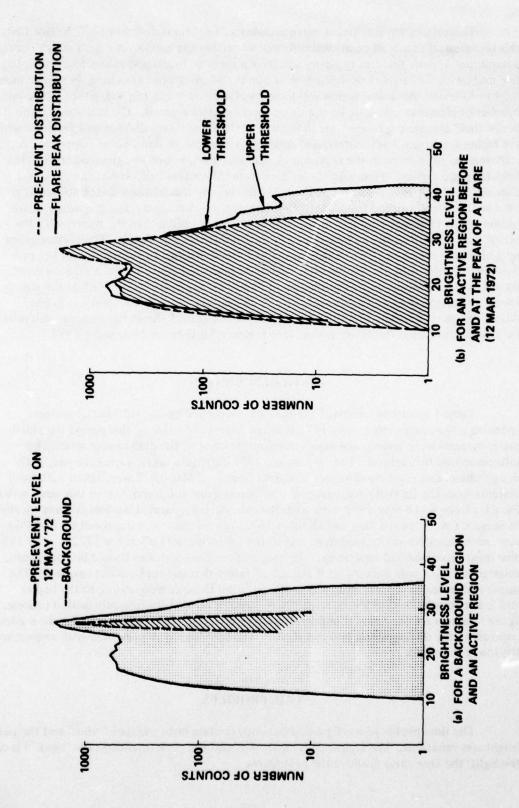


Figure 4a-b. Brightness distributions.

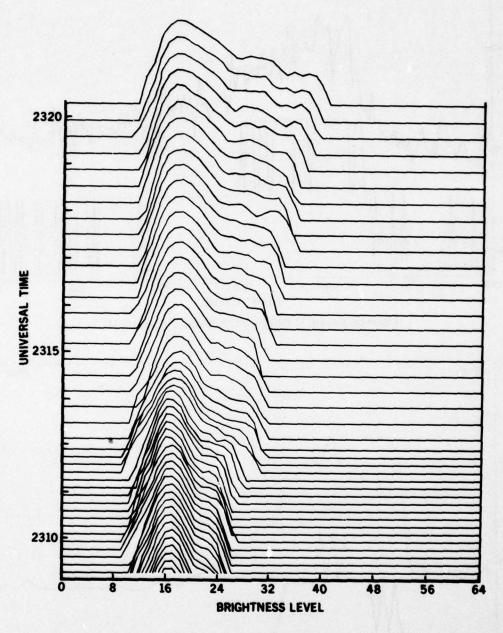


Figure 5. 2-B flare, 24 January 1971.

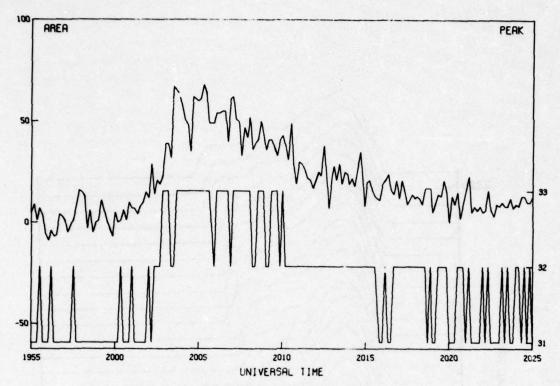


Figure 6a. Hawaii, 31 October 1972; R460, -F flare, bin 31.

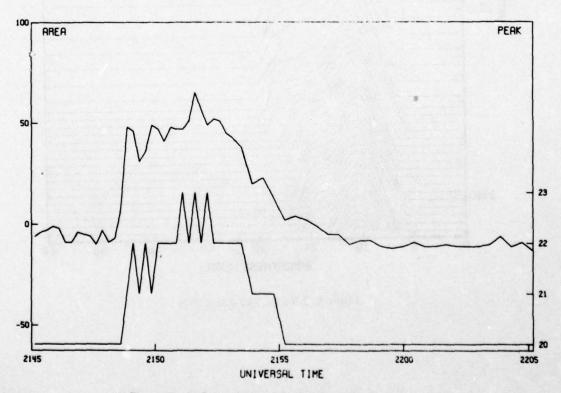


Figure 6b. La Posta, 2 May 1973; R092, -N flare, bin 20.

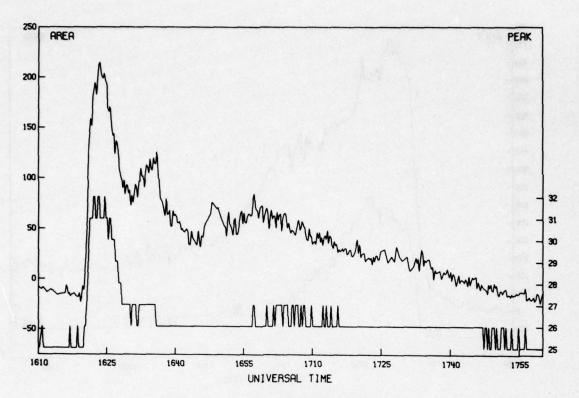


Figure 6c. La Posta, 11 April 1973; R077, -B flare, bin 25.

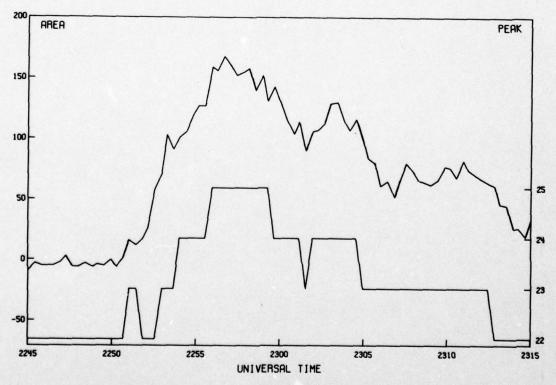


Figure 6d. La Posta 7 April 1973; R078, 1N flare, bin 22.

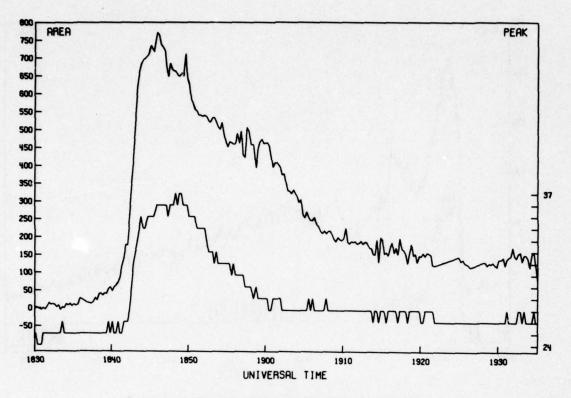


Figure 6e. La Posta, 11 April 1973; R077, 1B flare, bin 24.

Rather than discuss each of the 150 events separately, the authors have chosen specific sample events, both "classical" and "anomalous." The standard classification of solar flares has an area scale from the type 0 (or -) subflare to the largest (type 4) flare. There is also a brightness classification, ranging from faint (F) through normal (N), to bright (B). Our choice of representative classical events ranges from a -F to a 1B, and can be seen in fig 6a-e. These events rise rapidly, reach a definite peak, and have a smooth monotonic return to the pre-event level. Notice that the time, peak, and area axes are not similar from event to event, but rather are scaled to keep each event filling the plot. These events were chosen so that the classification from solar geophysical data (the labeled classification) corresponds to the size and brightness measured by the videometer, in the sense that subflares are smaller than type 1 flares, etc.

The videometer and solar geophysical data do not always agree on event classification, however, as indicated in fig 7a-d.

Figure 7a is a classified -F flare that had very large enhanced areas and brightness increases, but apparently because of the long time to the event peak ( $\sim 1~1/2~hr$ ), the event slipped by observers virtually unnoticed. The -N (fig 7b-c) appears to have no such problem, and in profile shape appears "classic." Although its area is less than a 2B that followed (fig 7d;  $\sim 300~vs \sim 1350$ ), the brightness variations are actually greater.

The preceding "anomalous" events have been included to stress the usefulness of the digitized time profiles.

The next two figures (8a-b and 9a-b) show flare data collected during the La Posta-Hawaii separation test. There was an unfortunately small amount of simultaneous flare data because of the small number of events and the lack of simultaneity in solar observing periods.

Figures 10a-d are a series of flares happening on 25 October 1972 from region 460. These events are well behaved in that subflares are smaller than type 1 flares and B flares are brighter than N flares. None of the events was long-lived; notice that the 1B is gone within ~5 minutes of its start.

In the data presentation, circles at data points indicate shifts in the background average brightness of greater than one bin; data gaps are indicative of extreme background shifts (usually >5). Shifts in the background level tend to come from obscurations of the sun (clouds, etc), and if these changes are too large, we expect our normalization routines to be unreliable.

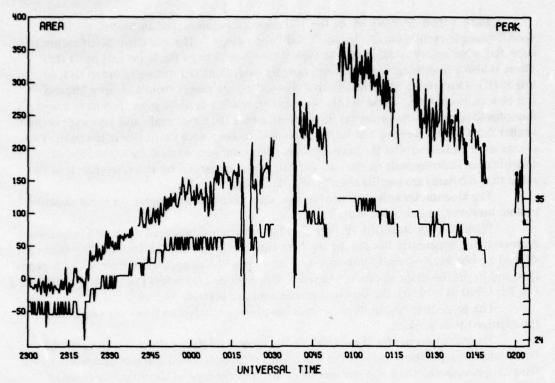


Figure 7a. Hawaii, 24 October 1972; R448, -F flare, bin 26.

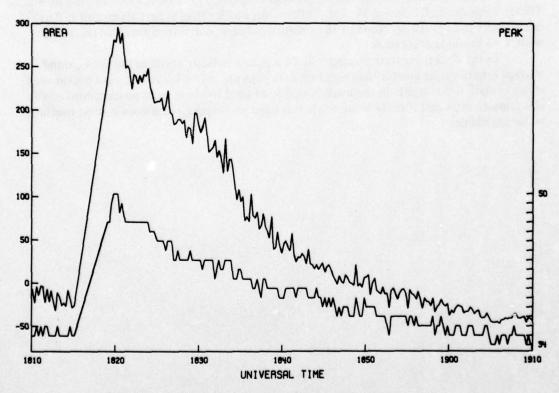


Figure 7b. La Posta, System A, 10 May 1972; R176, -N flare, bin 34.

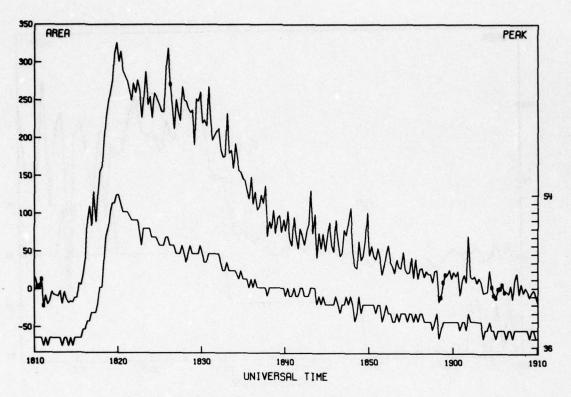


Figure 7c. La Posta, System B, 10 May 1972; R176, -N flare, bin 36.

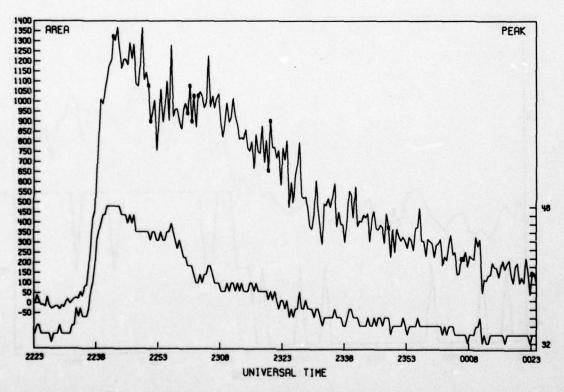


Figure 7d. La Posta, System B, 17 May 1972; R195, 2B flare, bin 30.

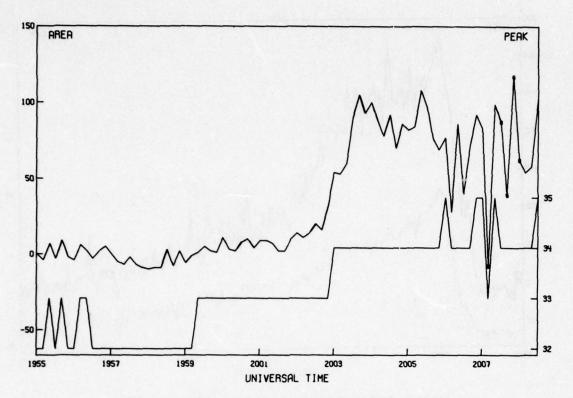


Figure 8a. La Posta, 31 October 1972; R460, -F flare, bin 32.

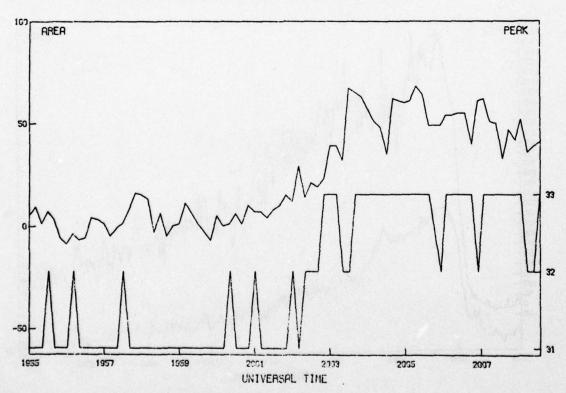


Figure 8b. Hawaii, 31 October 1972; R460, -F flare, bin 31.

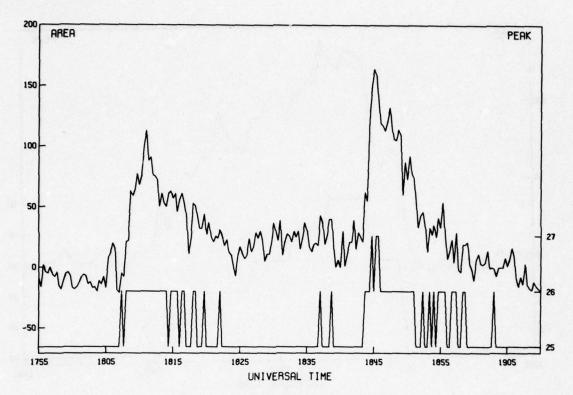


Figure 9a. La Posta, 10 September 1973; R219, U-F flares, bin 25.

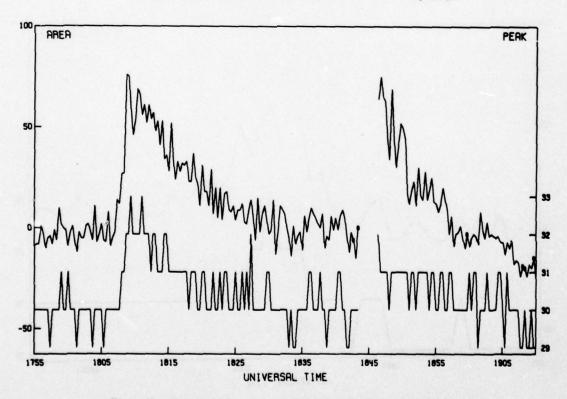


Figure 9b. Hawaii, 10 September 1973; R219, U-F flares, bin 29.

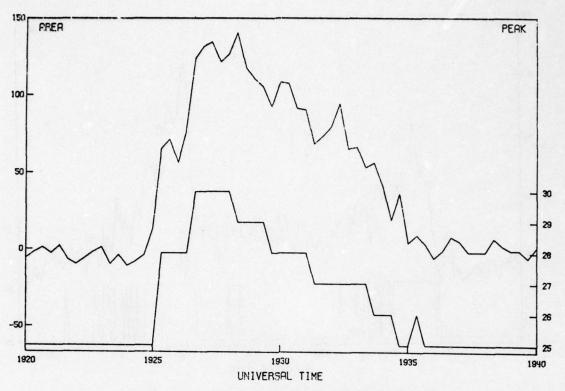


Figure 10a. La Posta, 25 October 1972; R460, -B flare, bin 25.

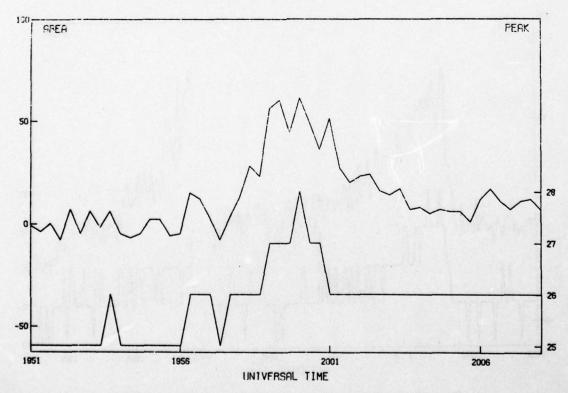


Figure 10b. La Posta, 25 October 1972; R460, -N flare, bin 25.

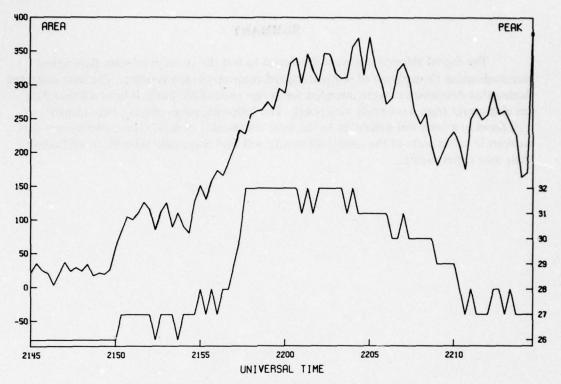


Figure 10c. La Posta, 25 October 1972; R460, 1N flare, bin 25.

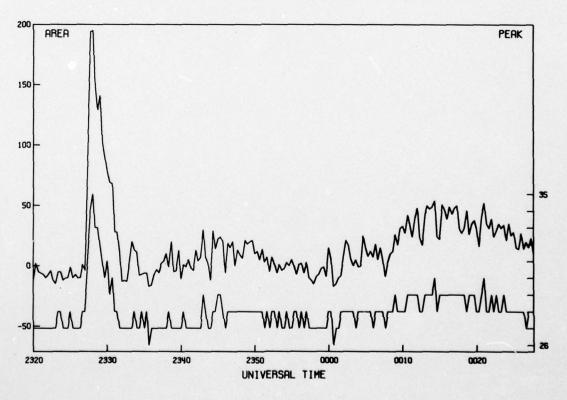
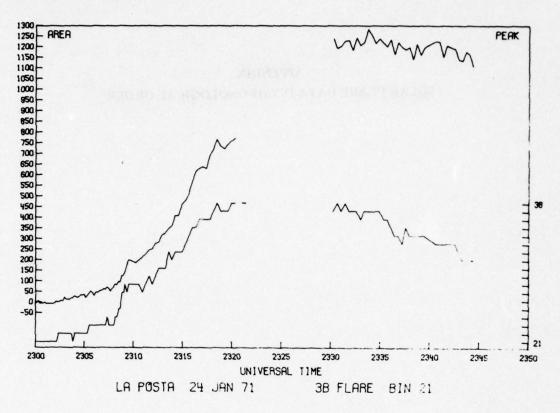


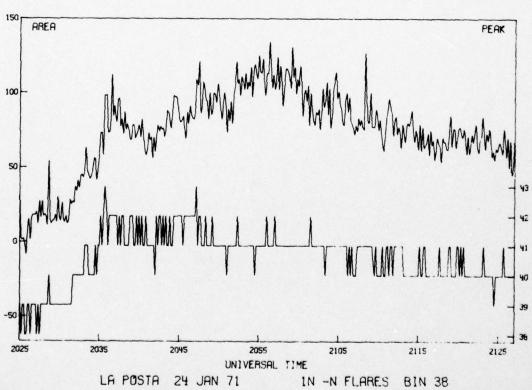
Figure 10d. La Posta, 25 October 1972; R460, 1B -N -N flares, bin 27.

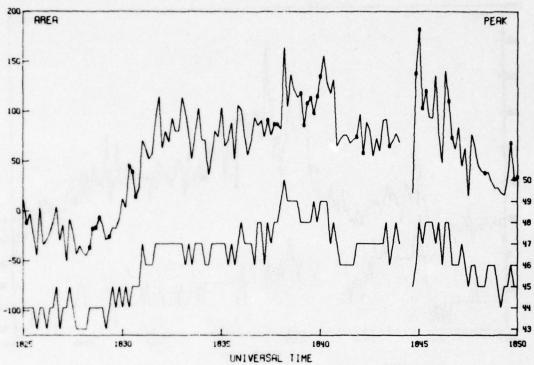
#### **SUMMARY**

The digital videometers were developed to test the concept of solar flare patrol standardization through use of semiautomated computer-video systems. The data collected during that development were intended for design evaluation, but it is believed that data are also useful from a scientific viewpoint. The following pages give  $H_{\alpha}$  time histories of 150 flares in a form not presented to the solar community before. The authors hope that workers in other parts of the solar community will find these data valuable in evaluating their own experiments.

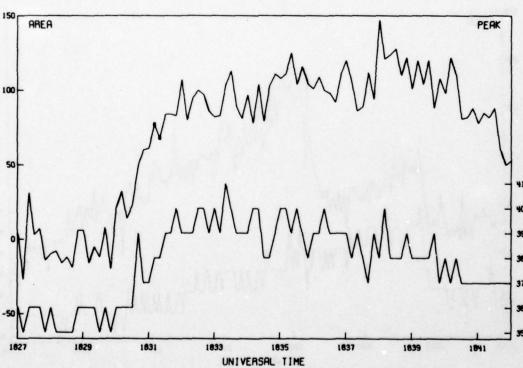
# APPENDIX SOLAR FLARE DATA IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER



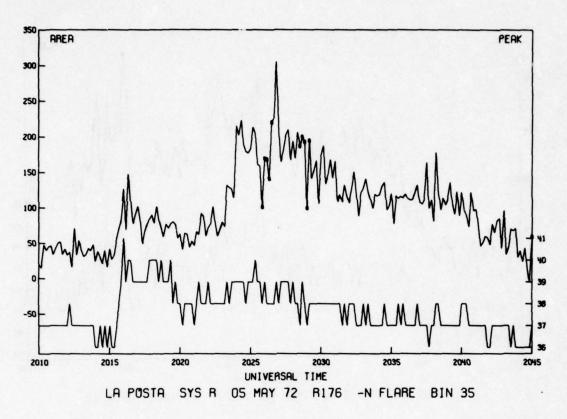


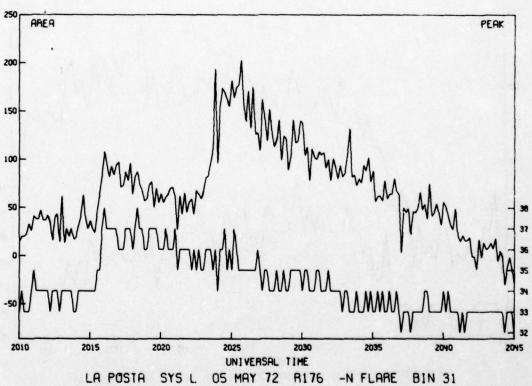


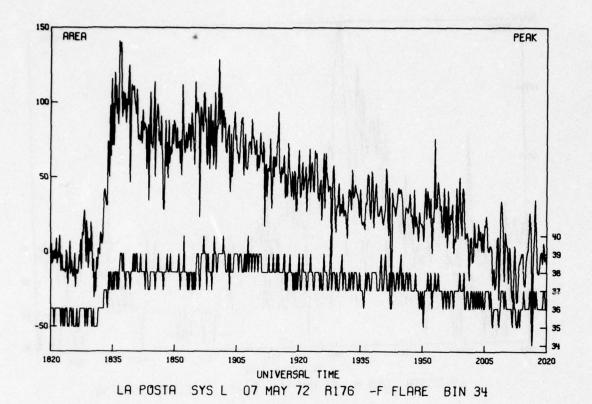
LA POSTA SYS R OS MAY 72 R176 -F FLARE BIN 42

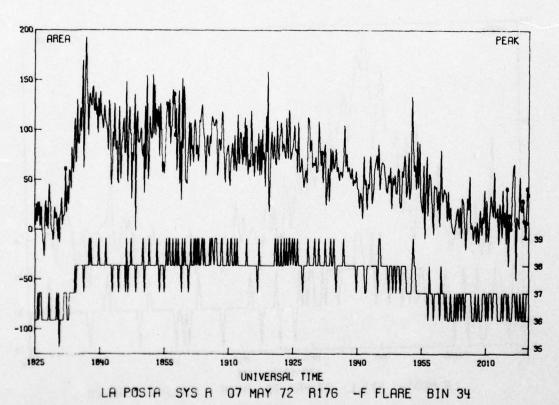


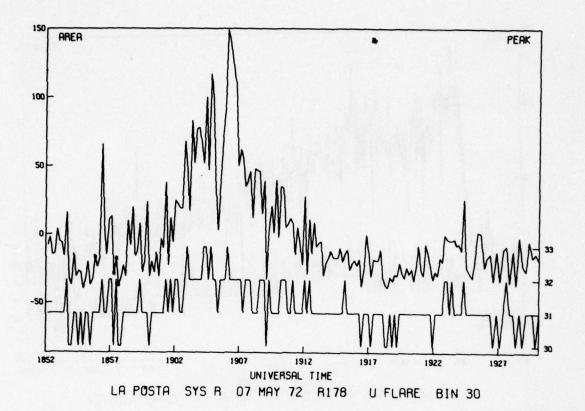
LA POSTA SYS L OS MAY 72 R176 -F FLARE BIN 33

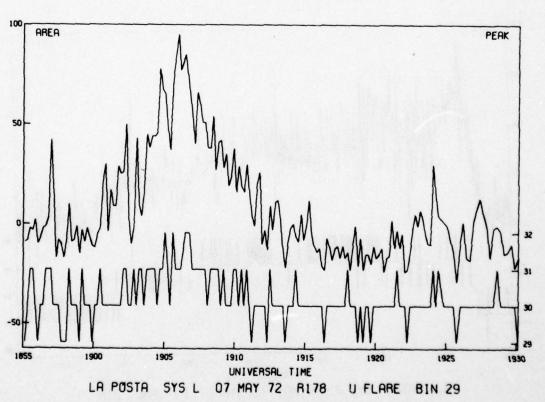


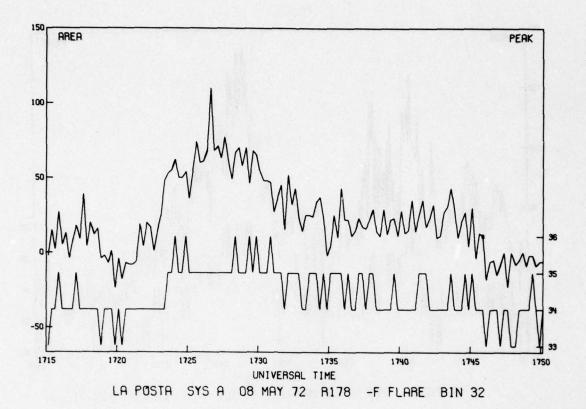


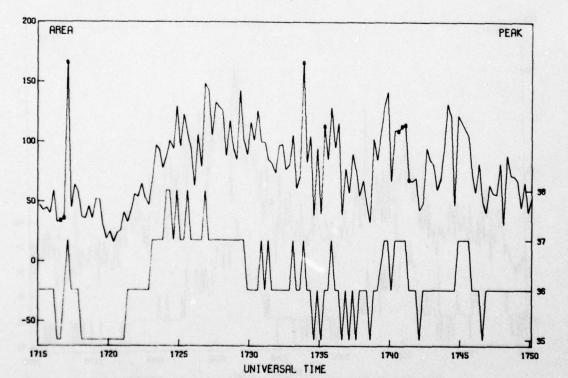




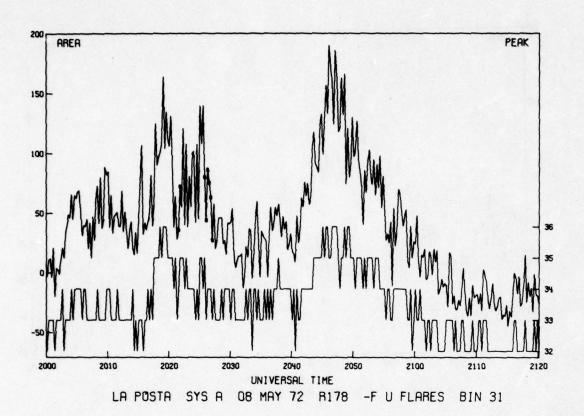


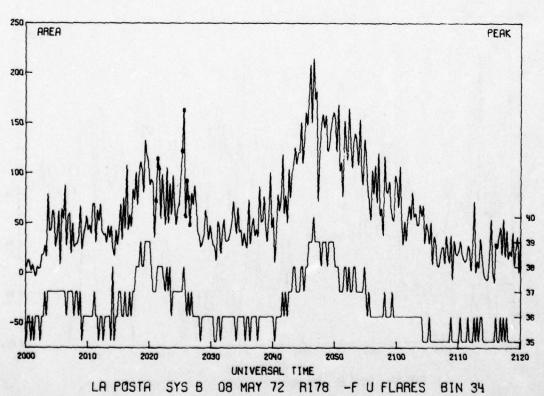


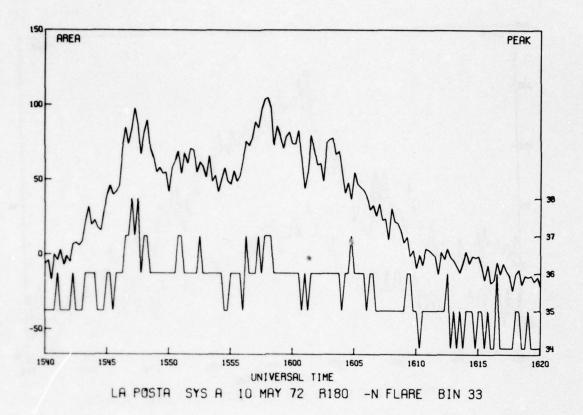


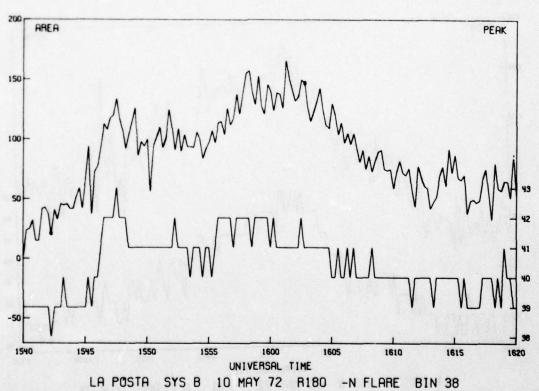


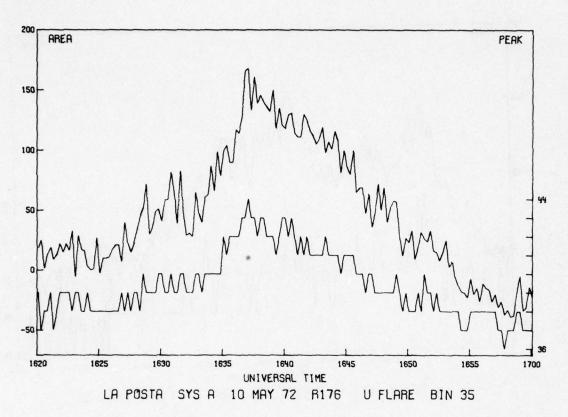
LA POSTA SYS B 08 MAY 72 R178 -F FLARE BIN 34

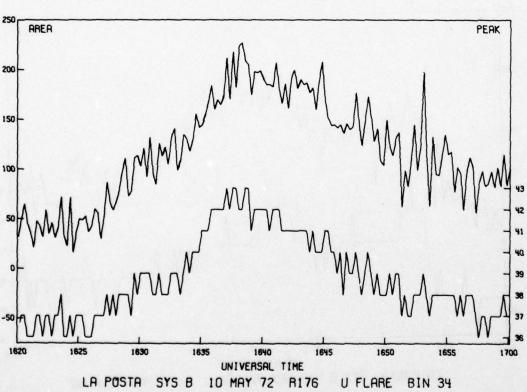


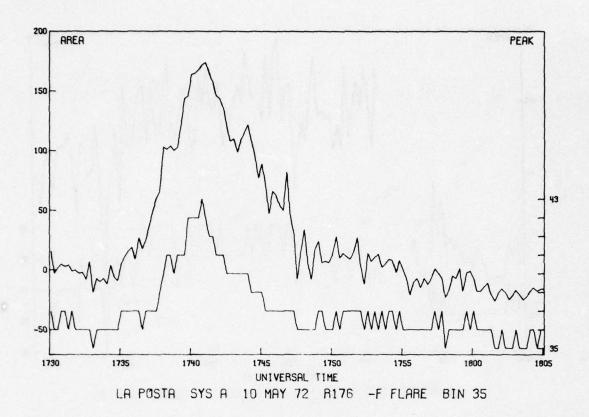






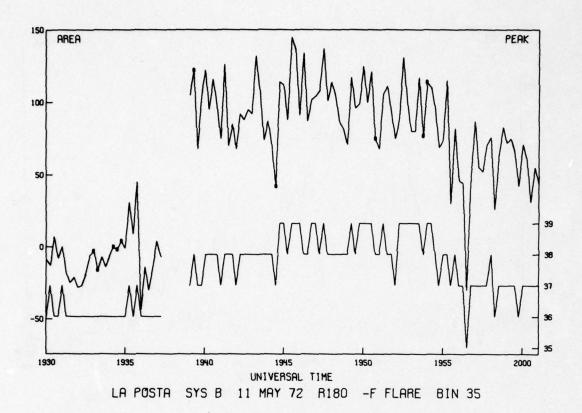


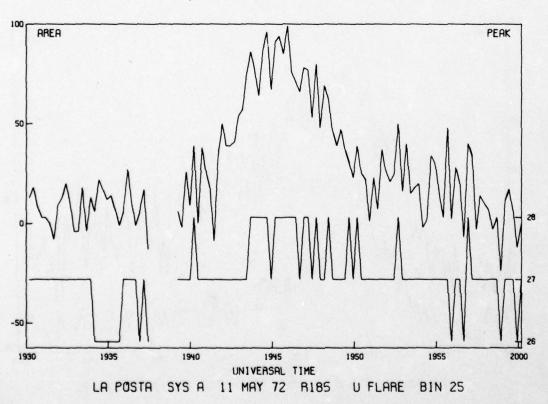


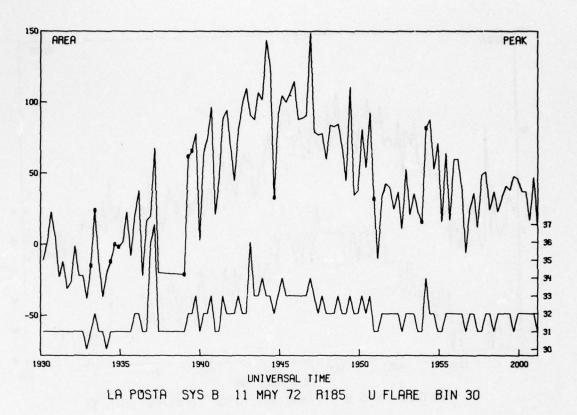


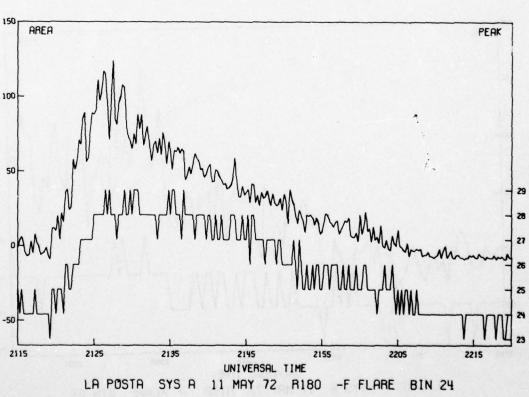
UNIVERSAL TIME 10 MAY 72 R176 -F FLARE BIN 35

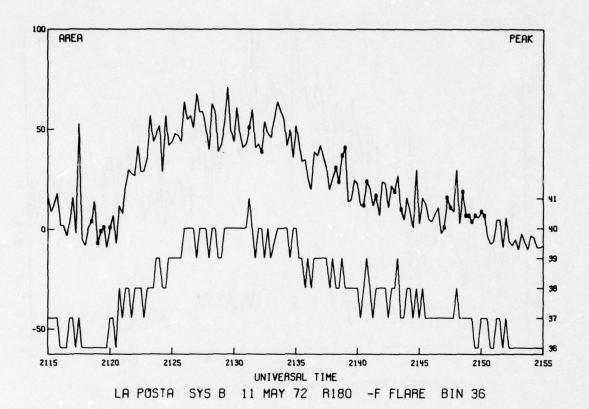
LA POSTA SYS B











2255

UNIVERSAL TIME

11 MAY 72 R180

2300

-F FLARE

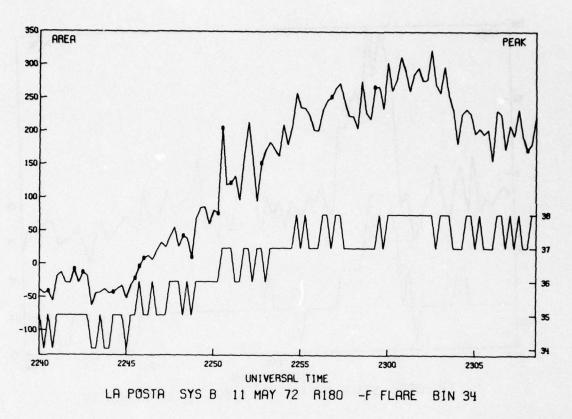
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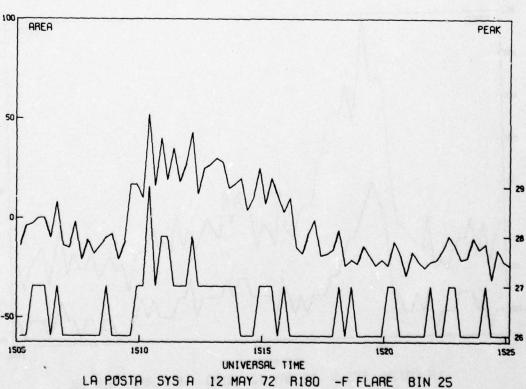
**BIN 23** 

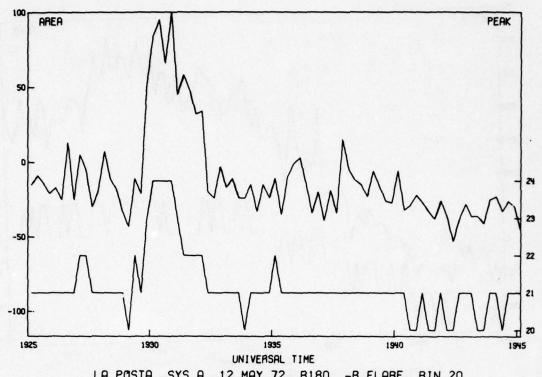
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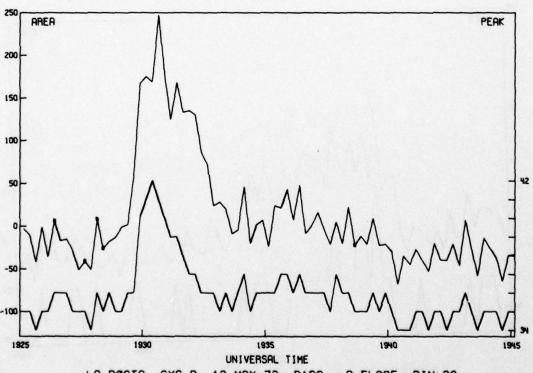
LA POSTA SYS A



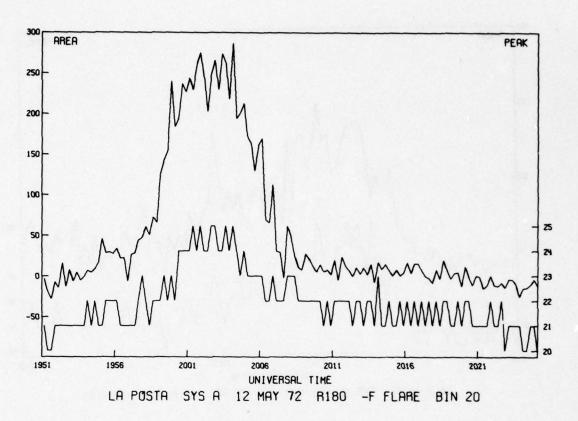


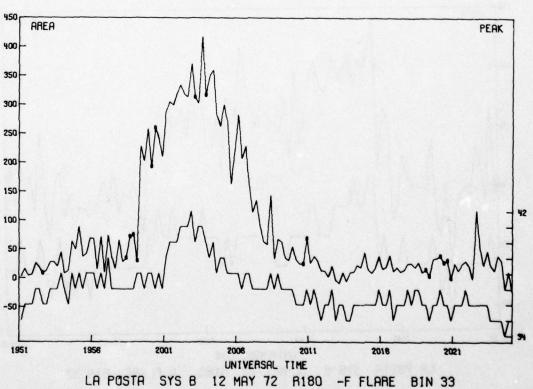


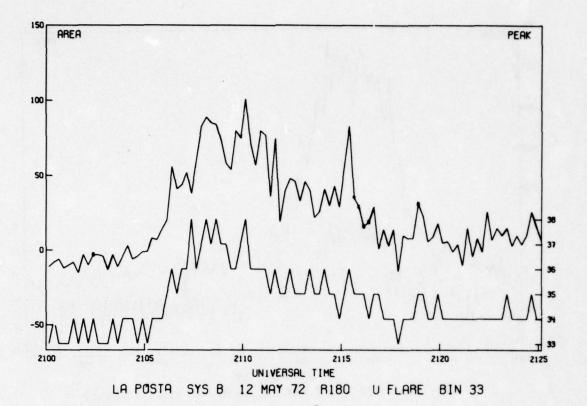
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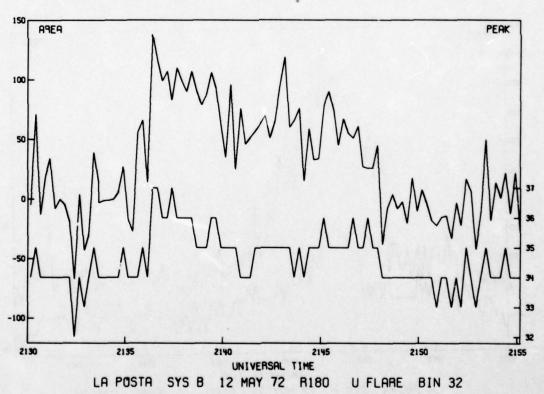


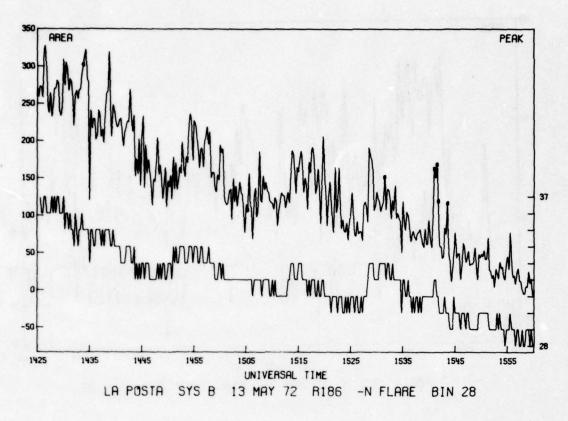
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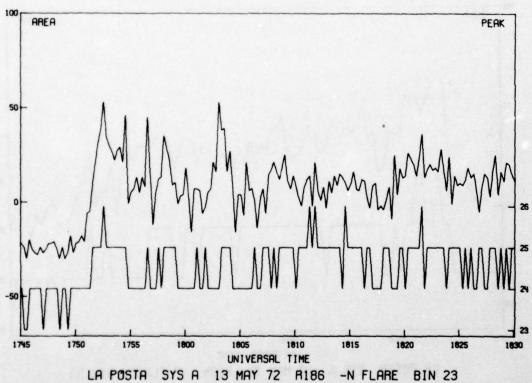


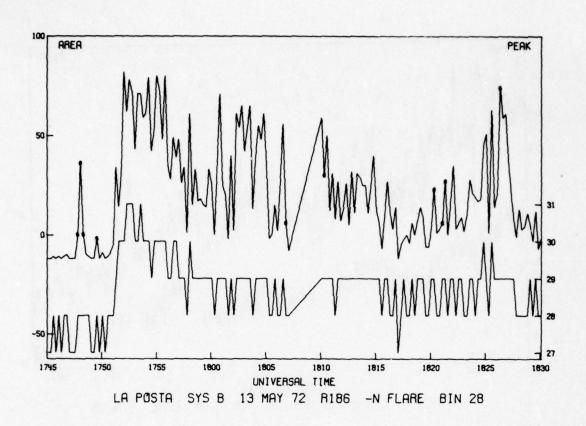


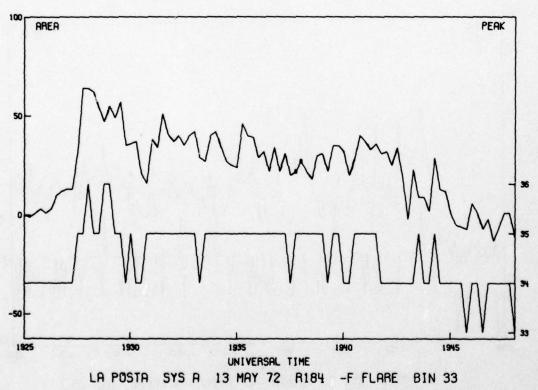


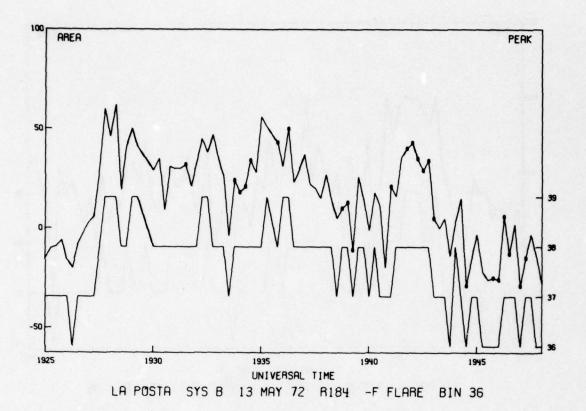


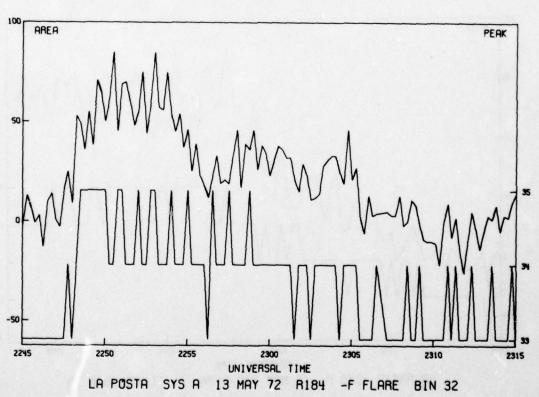


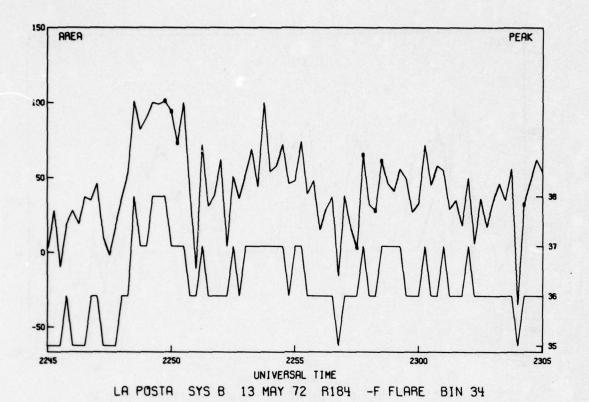


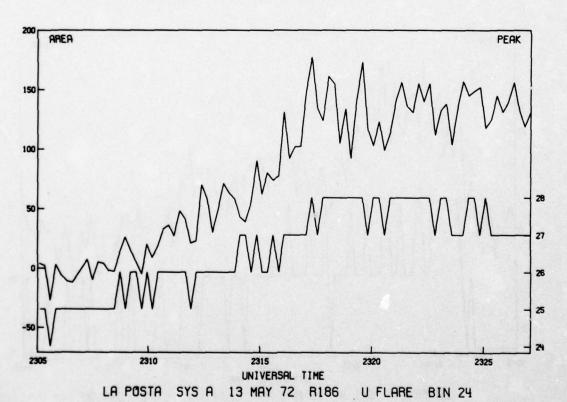


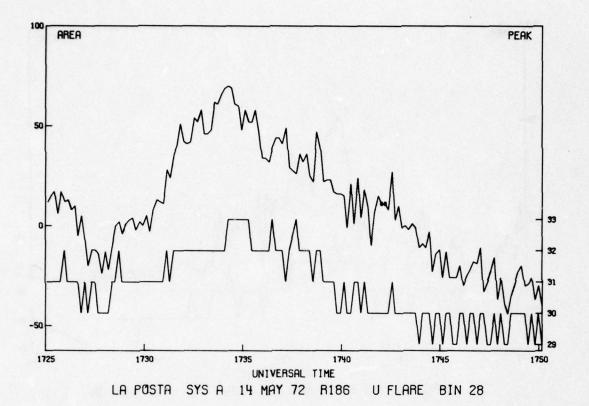


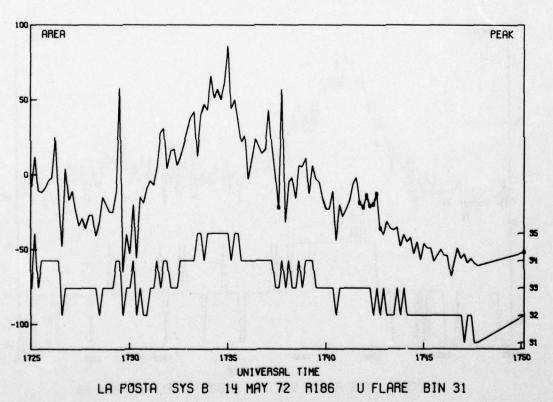


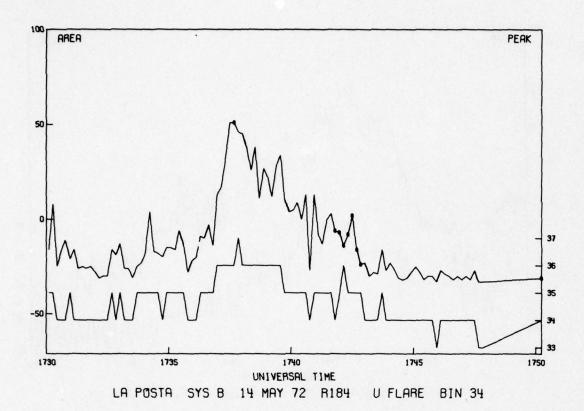


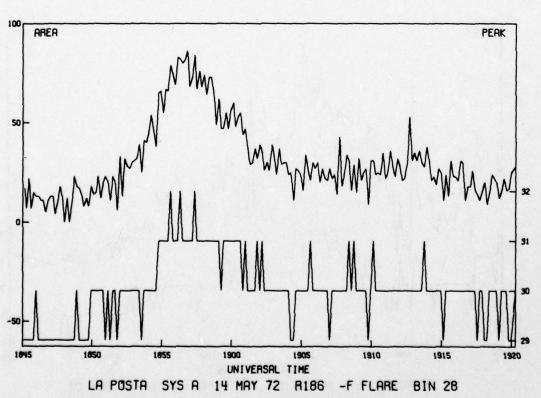


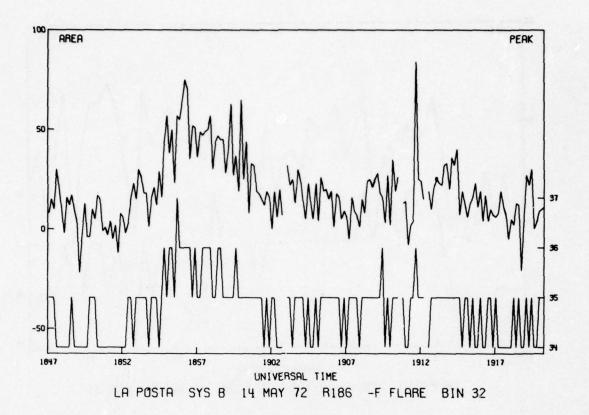


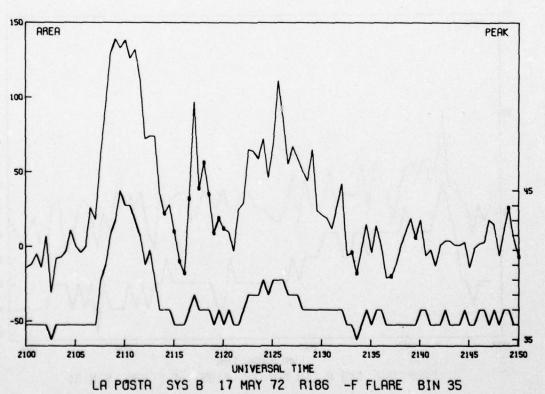


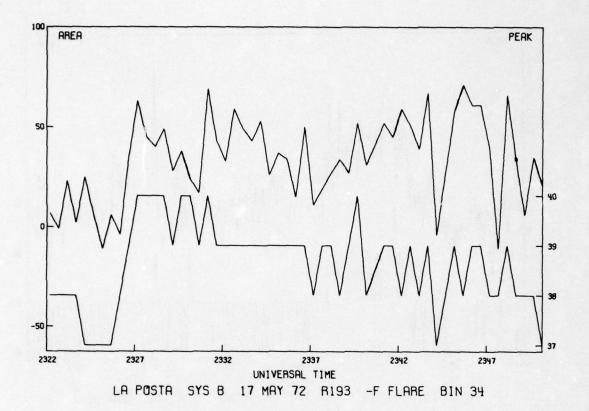


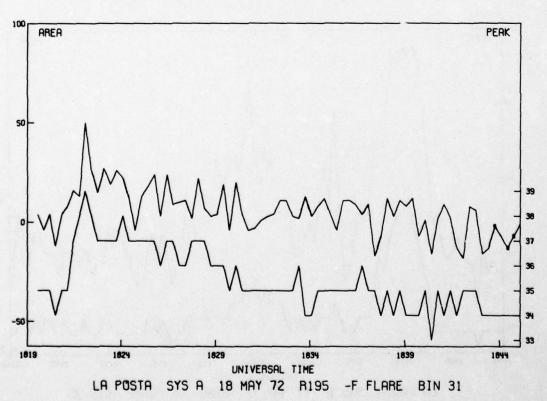


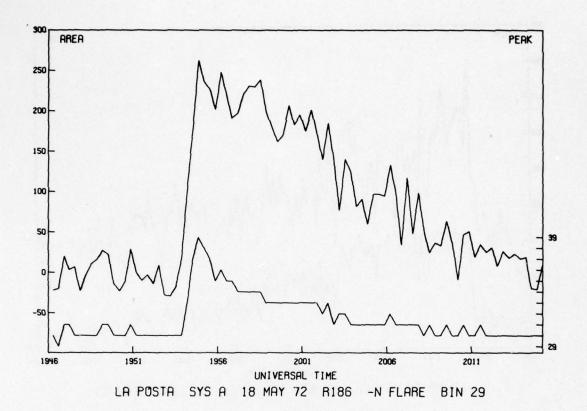


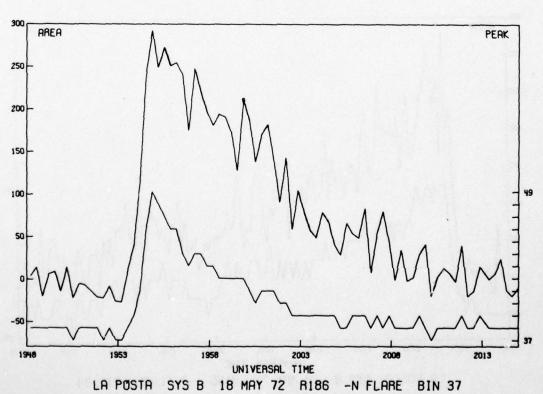


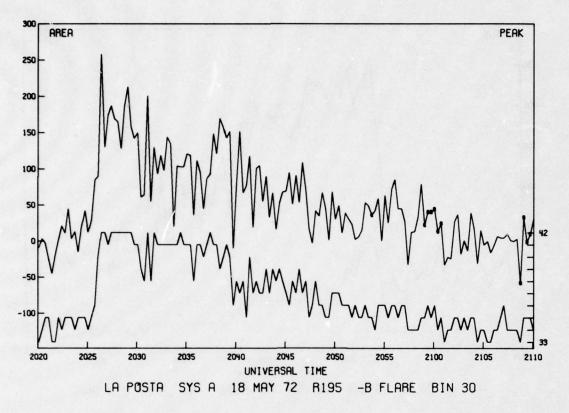


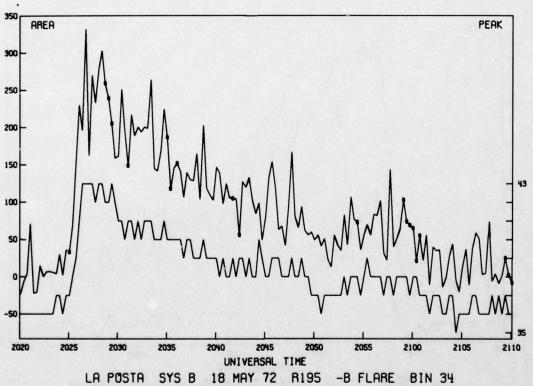


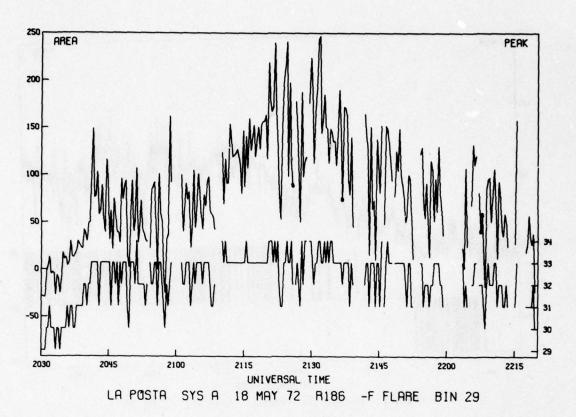


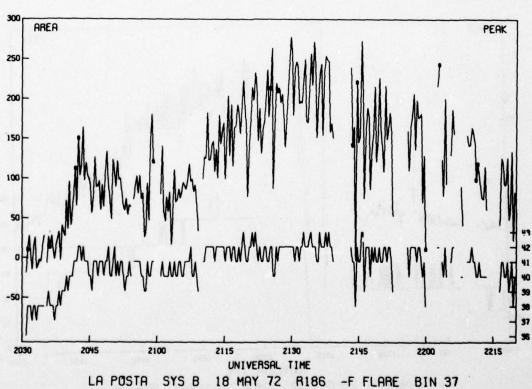


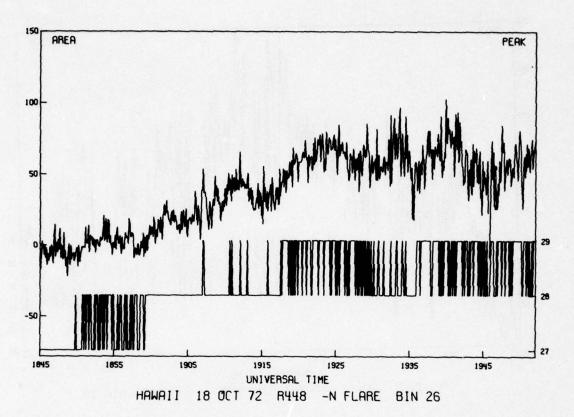


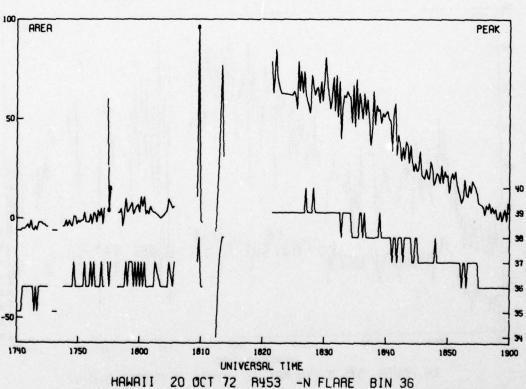


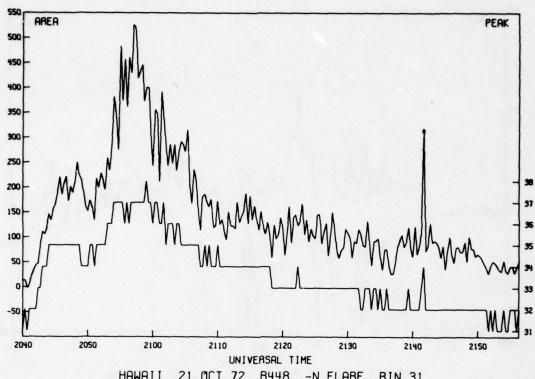




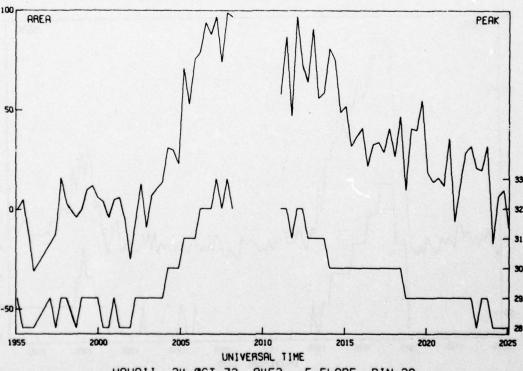




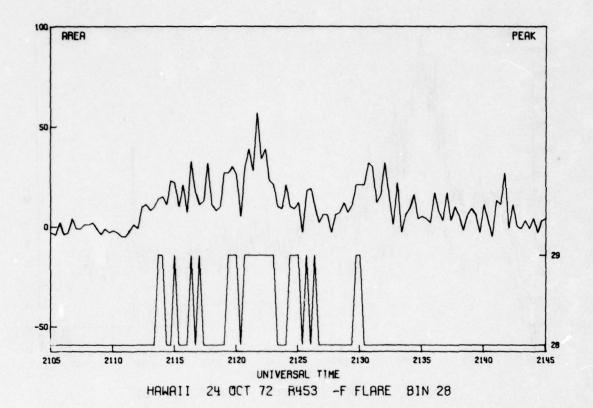


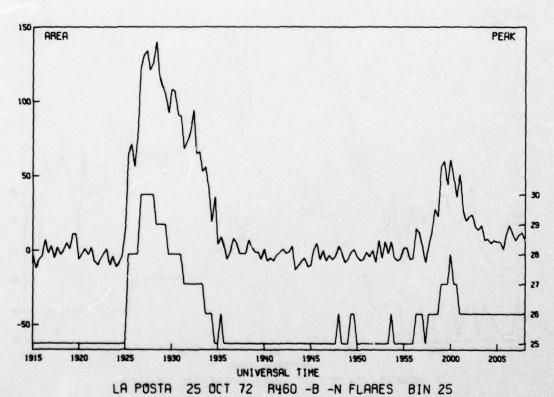


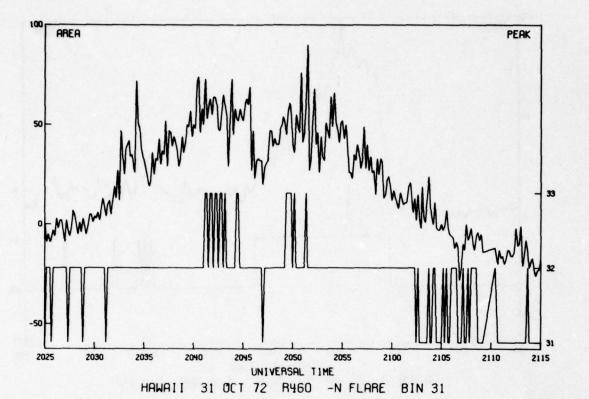
HAWAII 21 OCT 72 R448 -N FLARE BIN 31

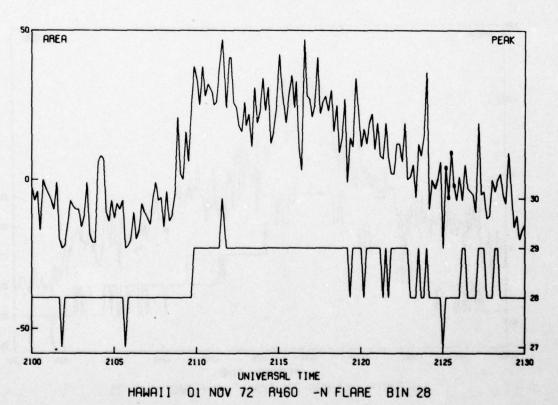


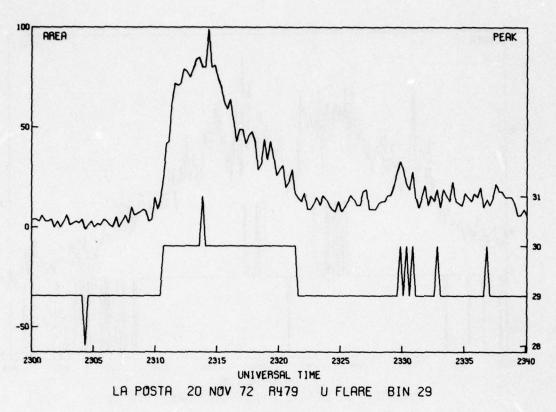
24 OCT 72 R453 -F FLARE BIN 28 IIAWAH

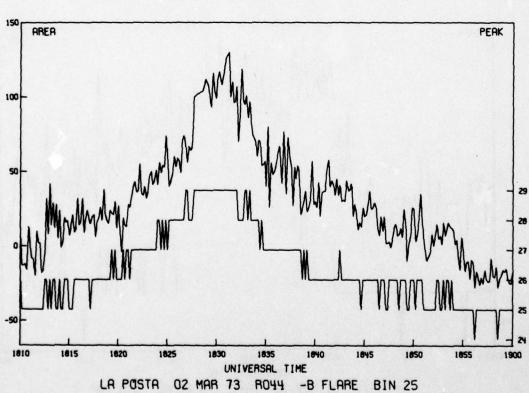


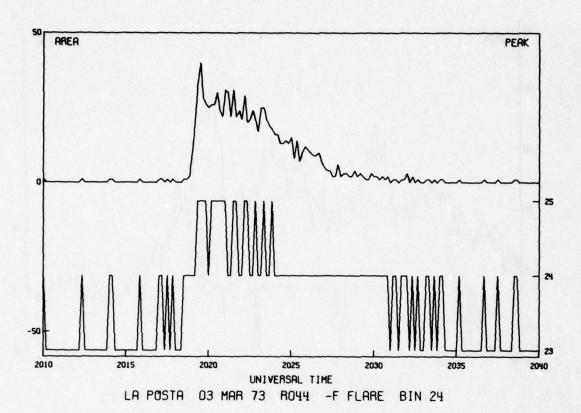


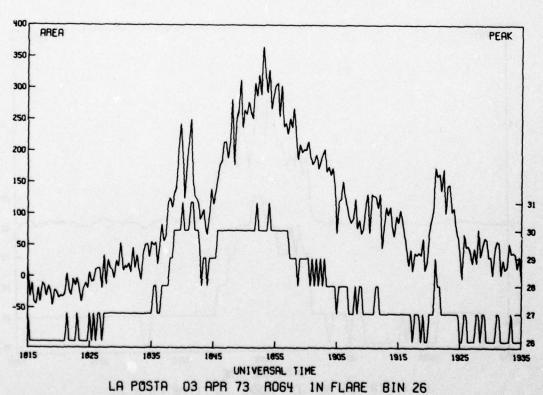


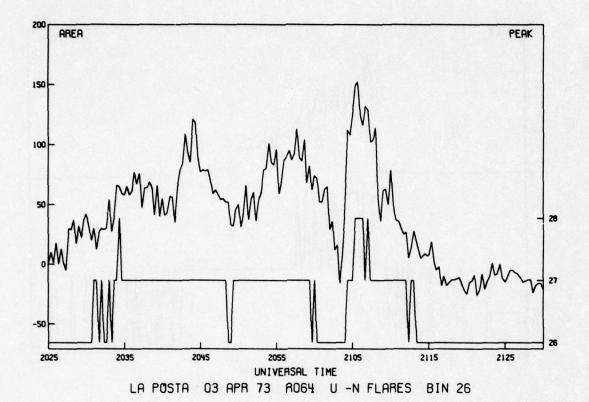


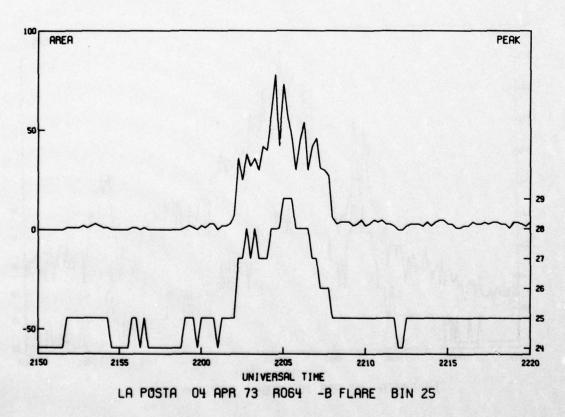


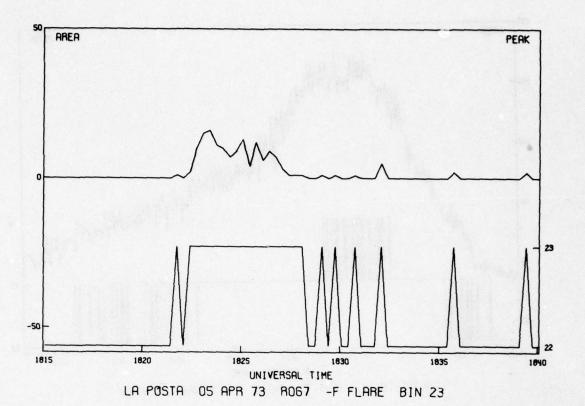


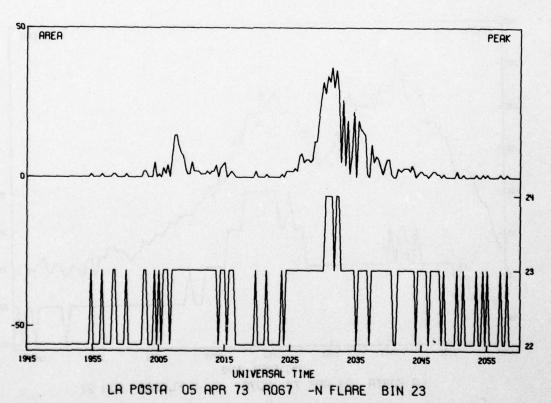


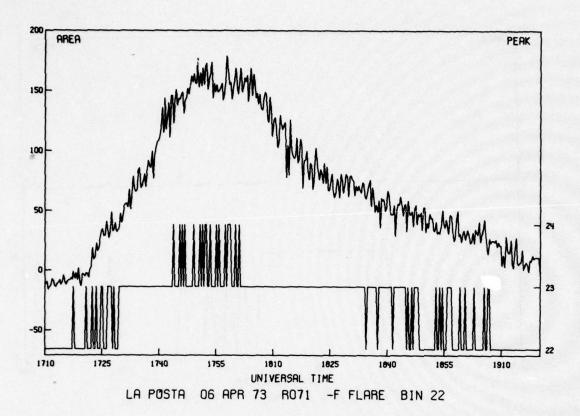


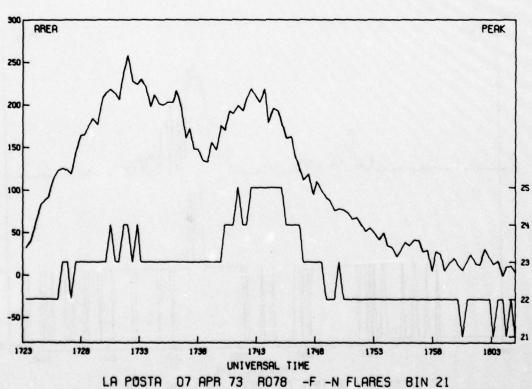


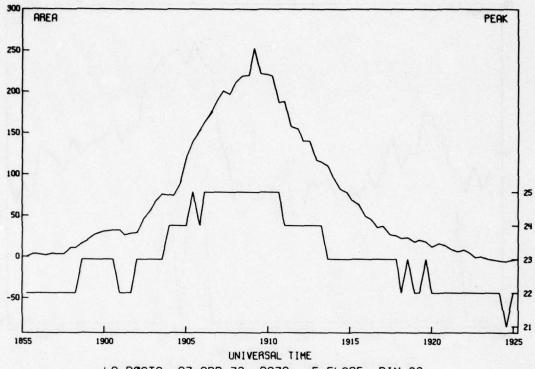




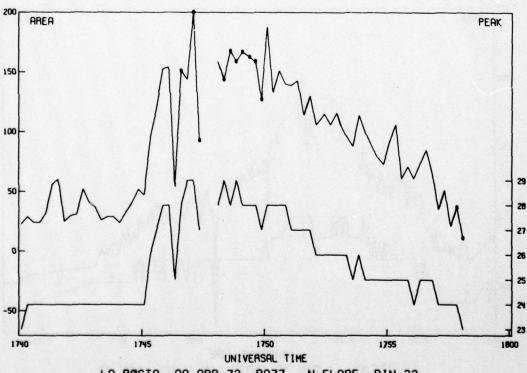




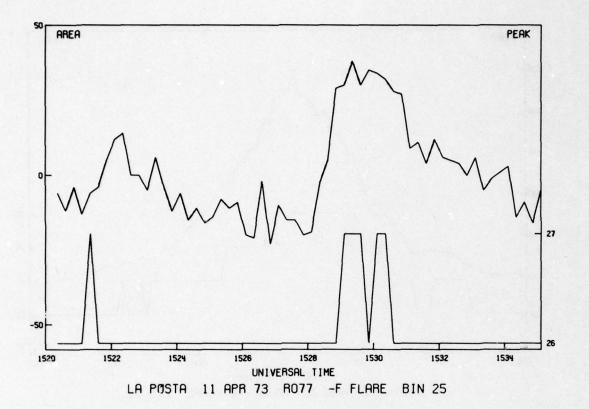


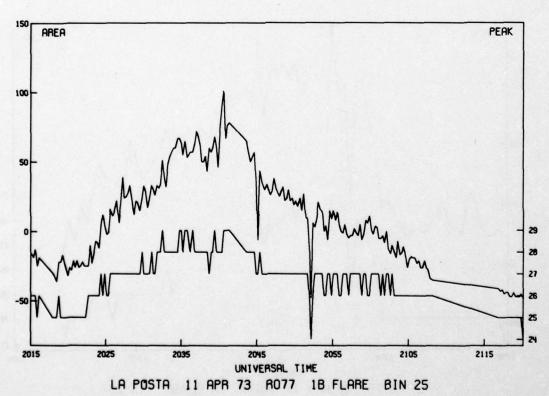


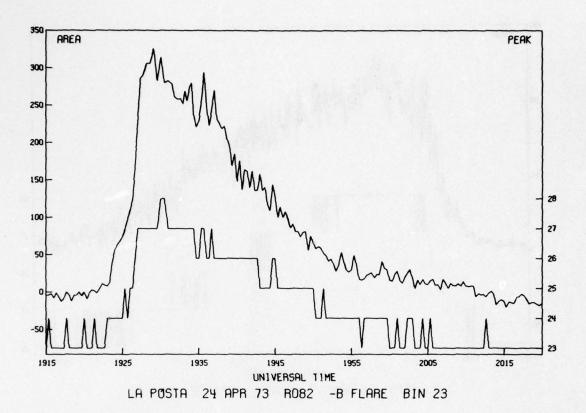
LA POSTA 07 APR 73 RO78 -F FLARE BIN 22

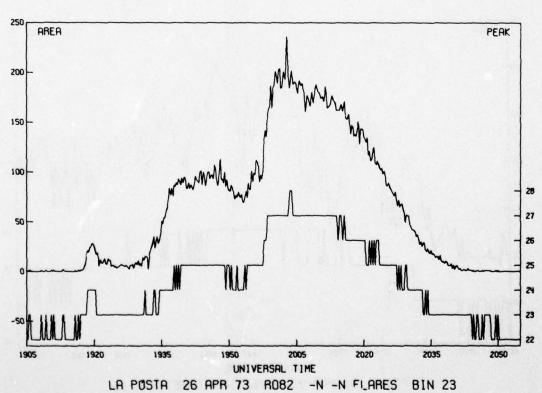


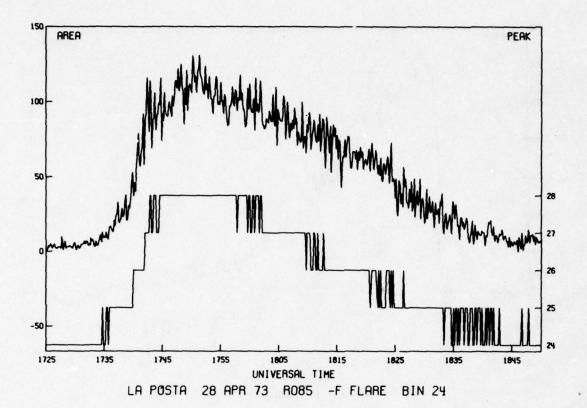
LA POSTA 09 APR 73 RO77 -N FLARE BIN 23

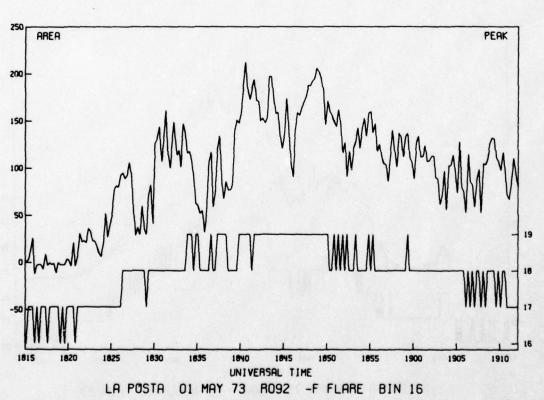


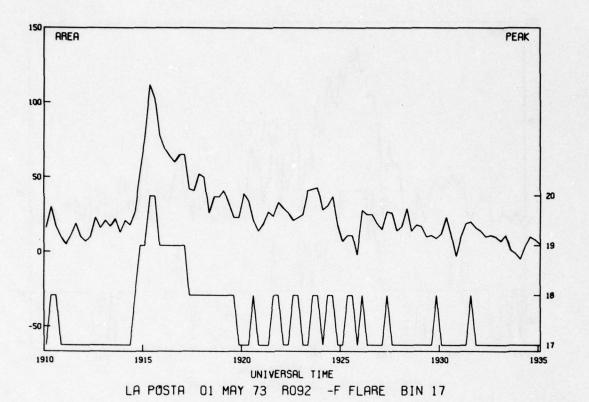


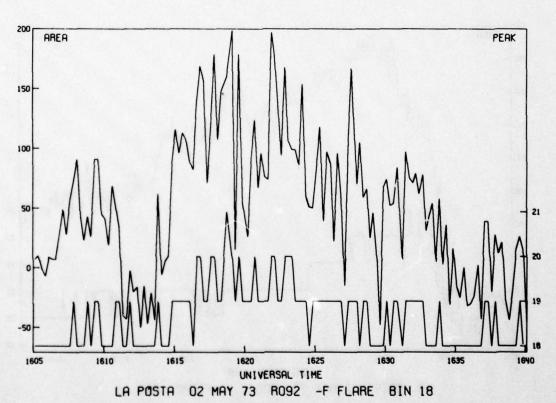


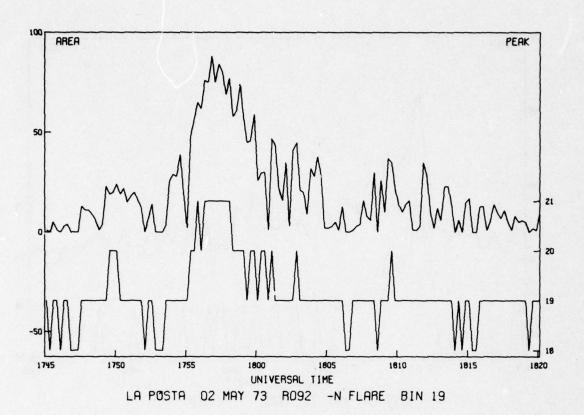


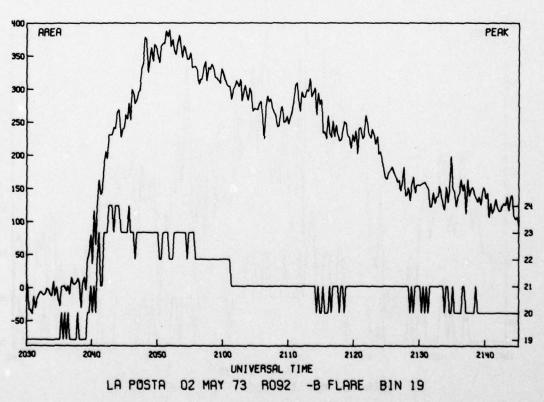


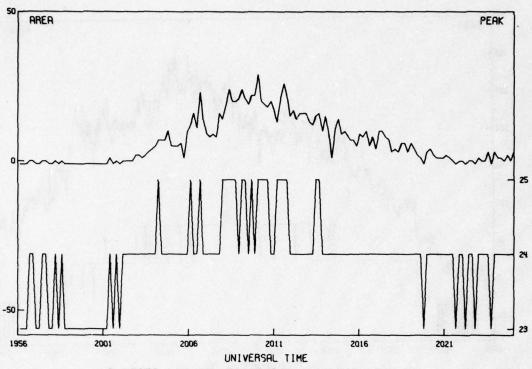




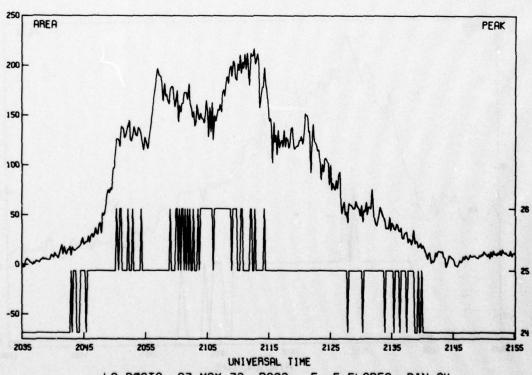




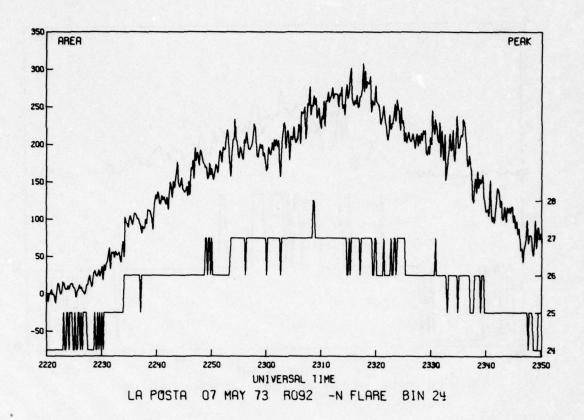


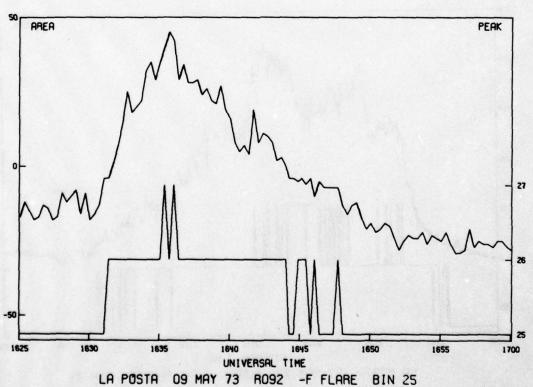


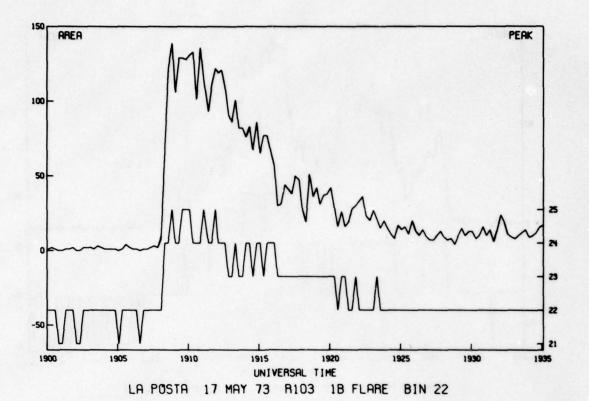
LA POSTA 07 MAY 73 RO92 -N FLARE BIN 24

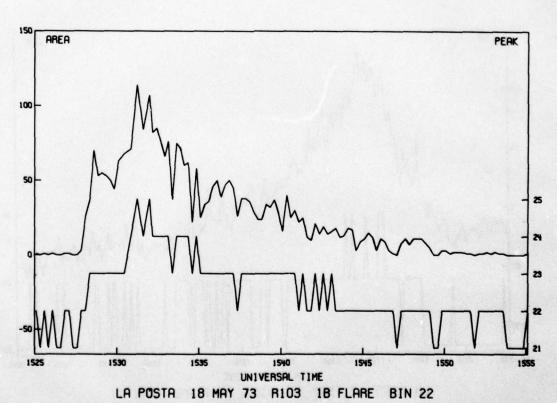


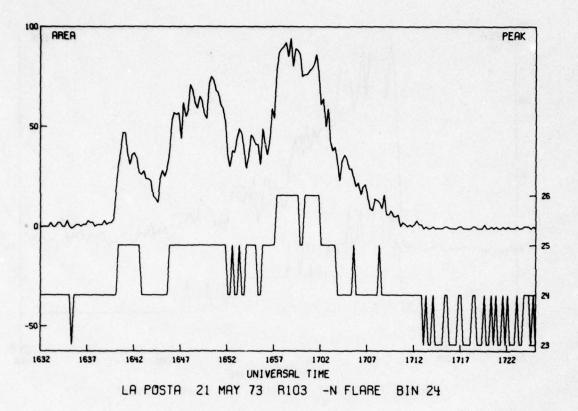
LA POSTA 07 MAY 73 RO92 -F -F FLARES BIN 24

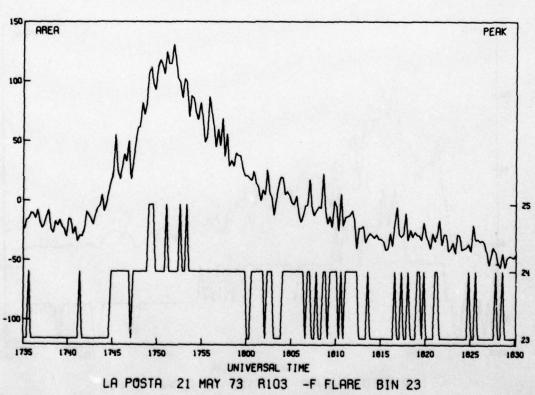


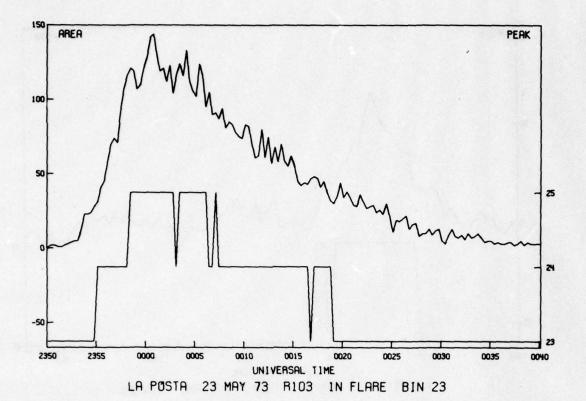


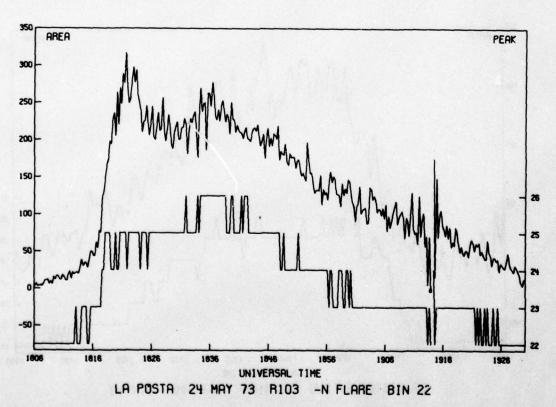


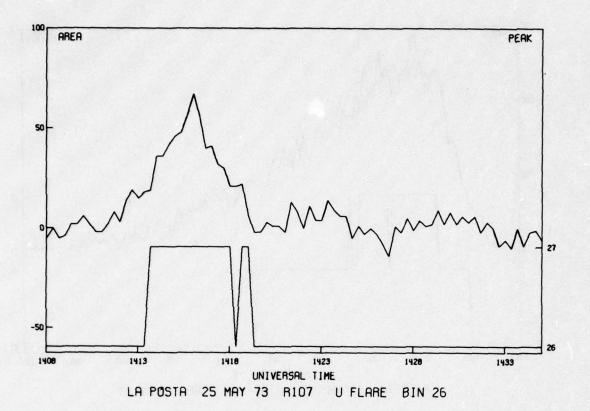


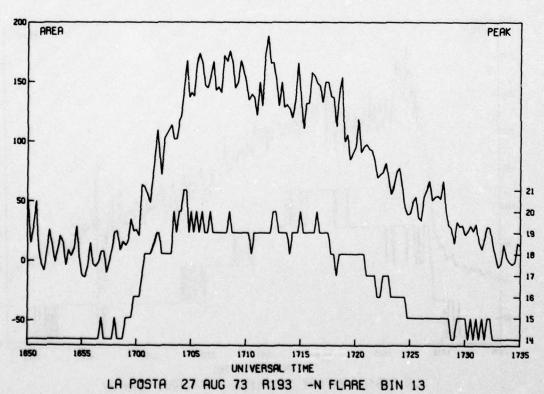


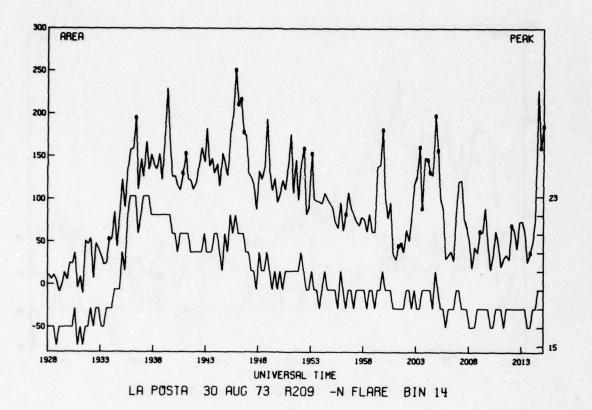


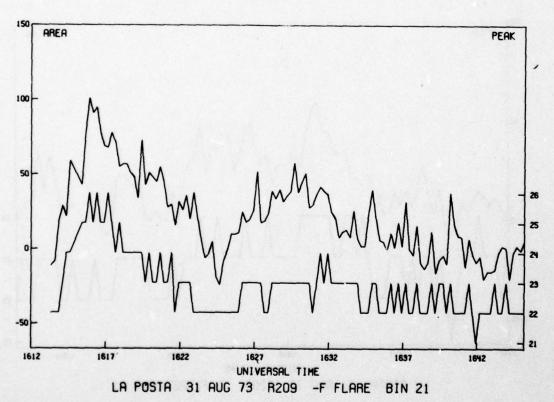


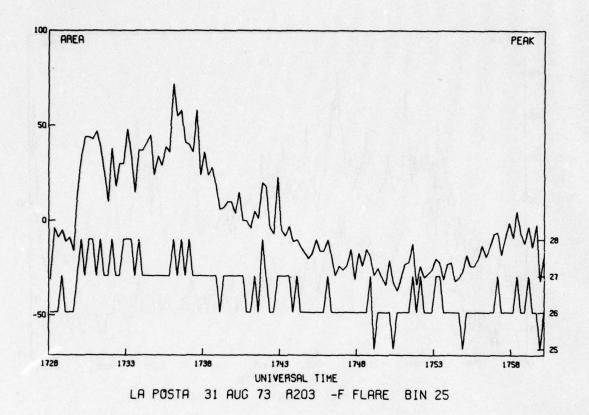


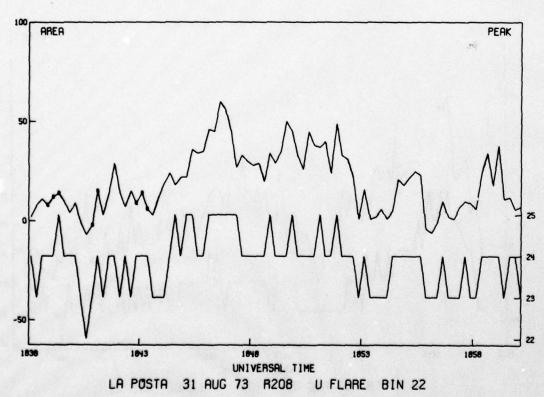


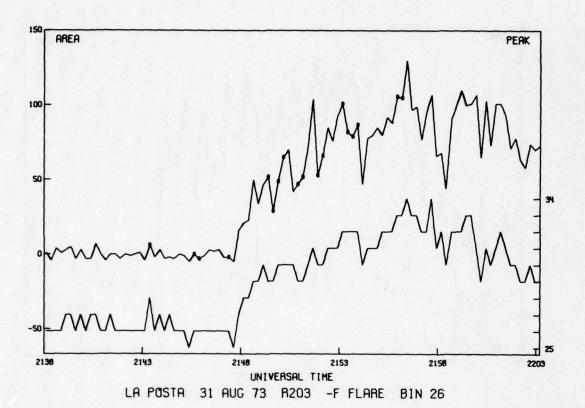


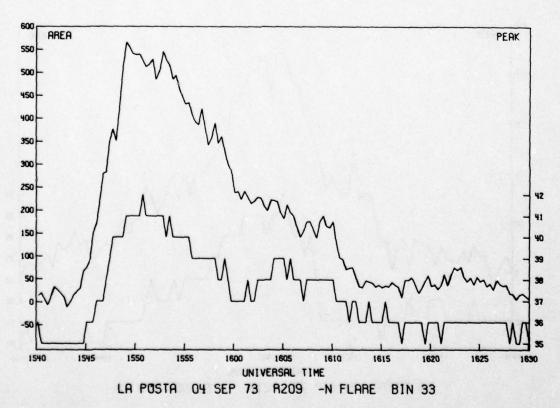


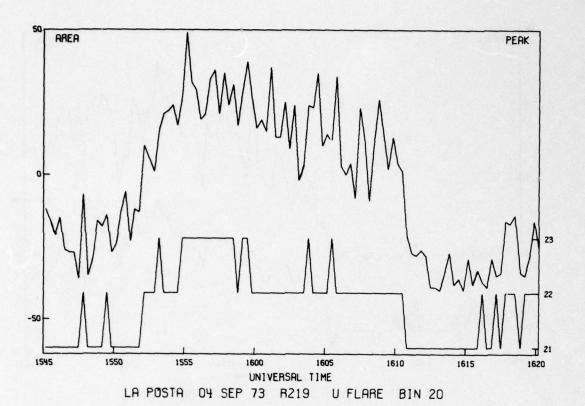


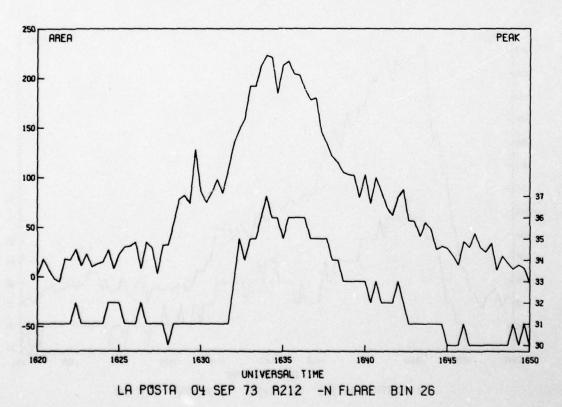


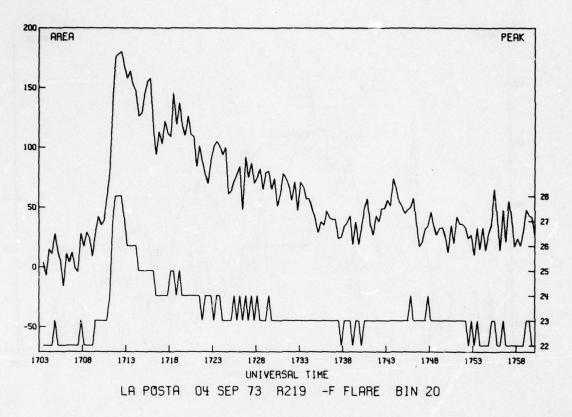


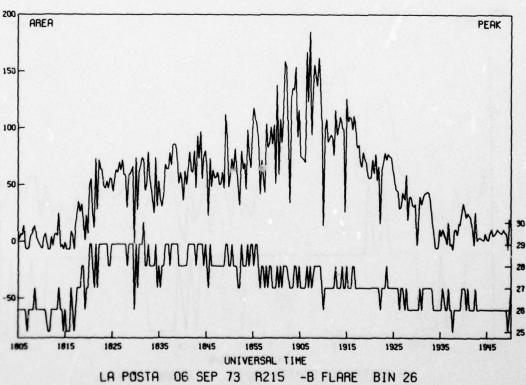


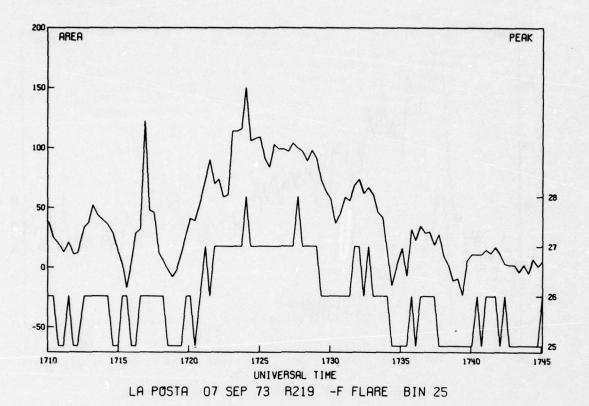


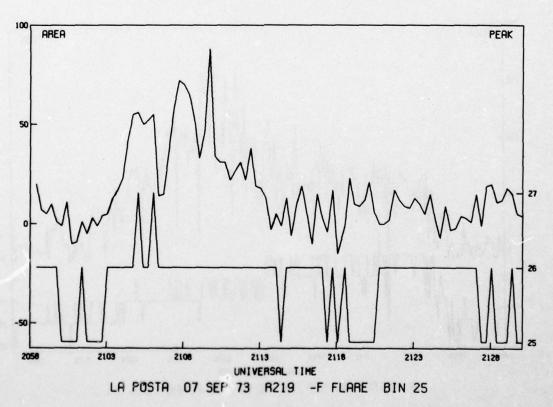


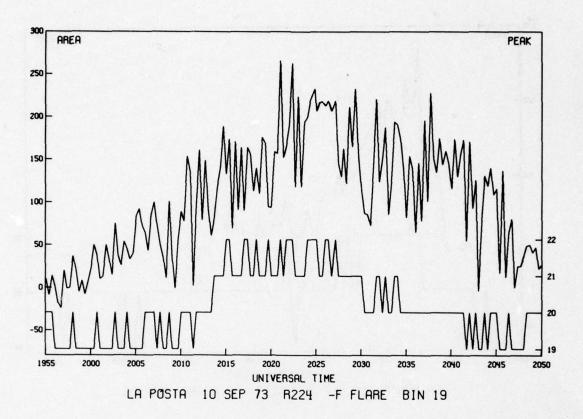


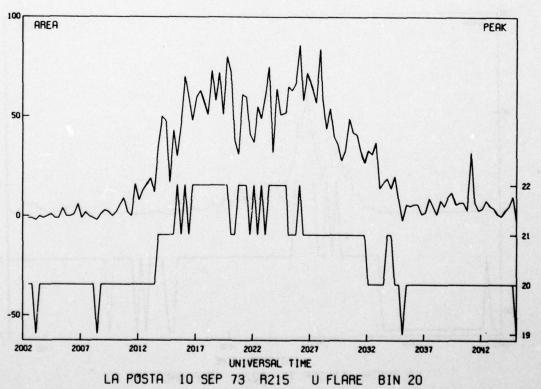


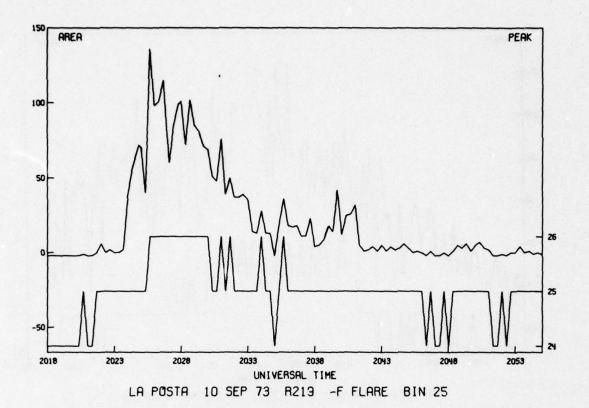


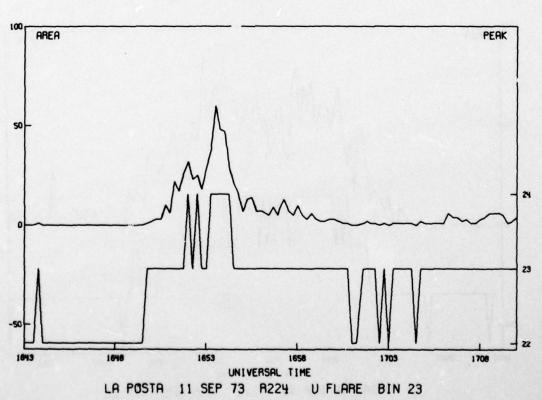


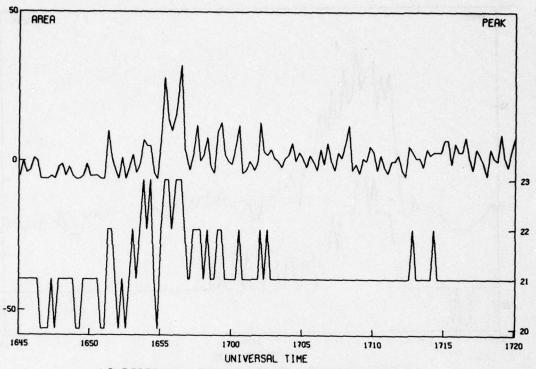




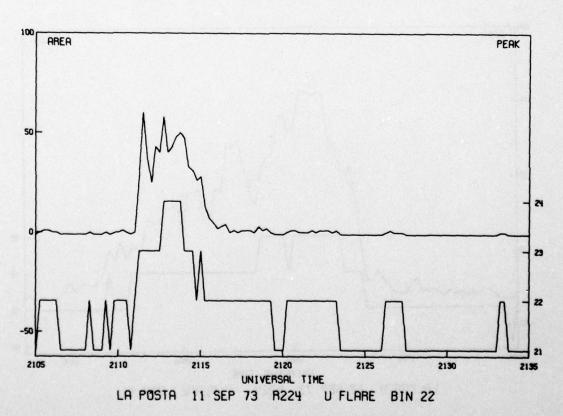


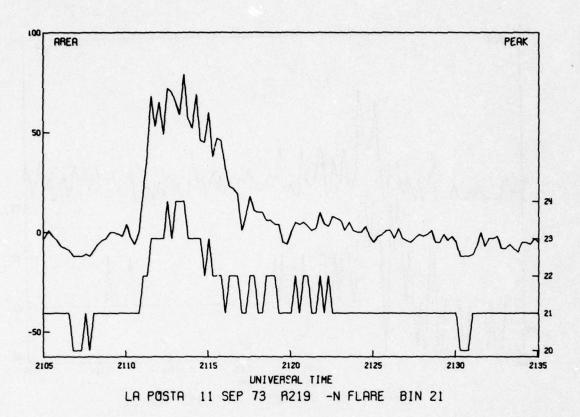


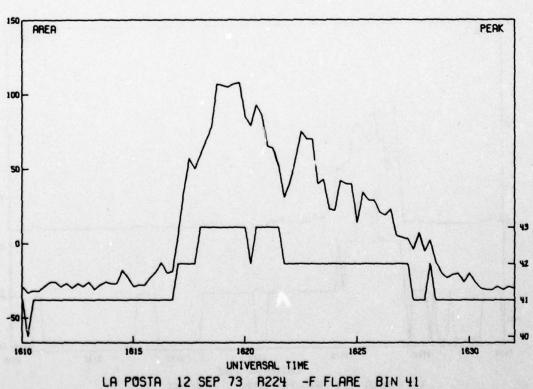


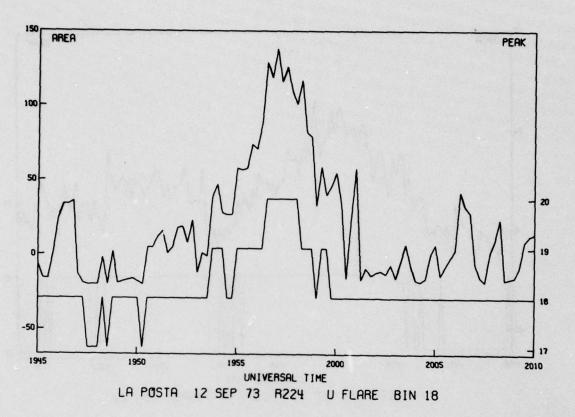


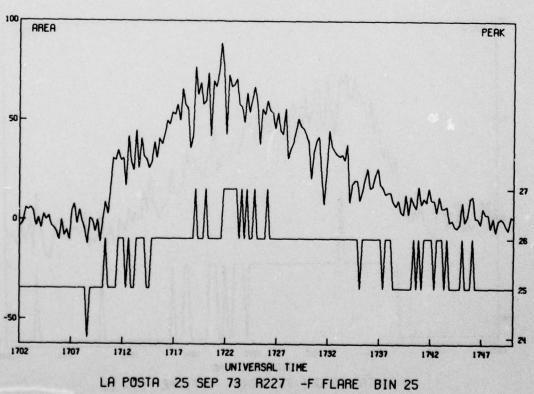
LA POSTA 11 SEP 73 R219 -F FLARE BIN 21

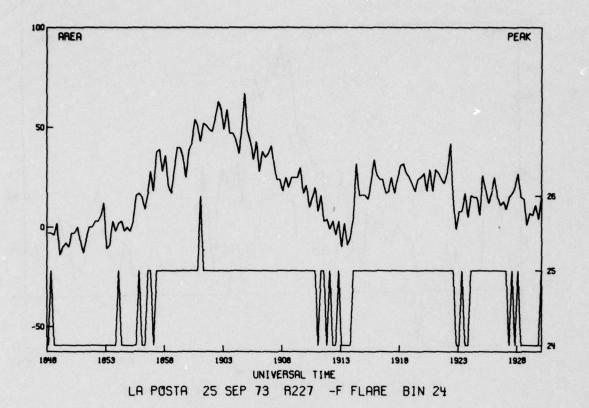


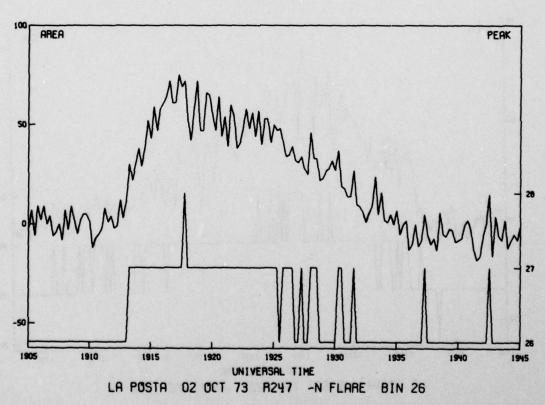


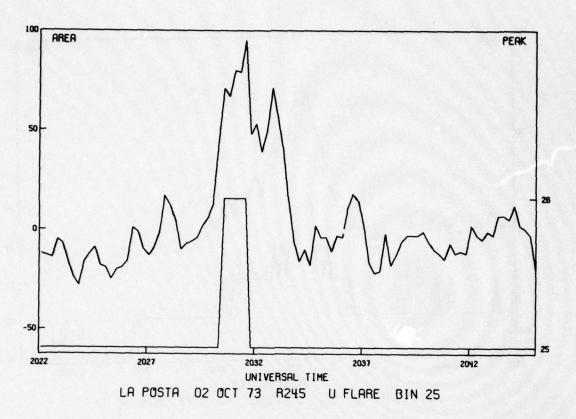


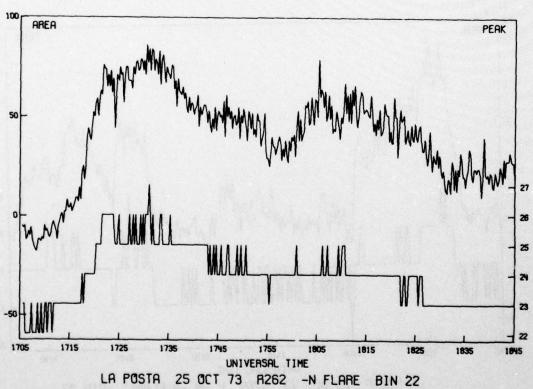


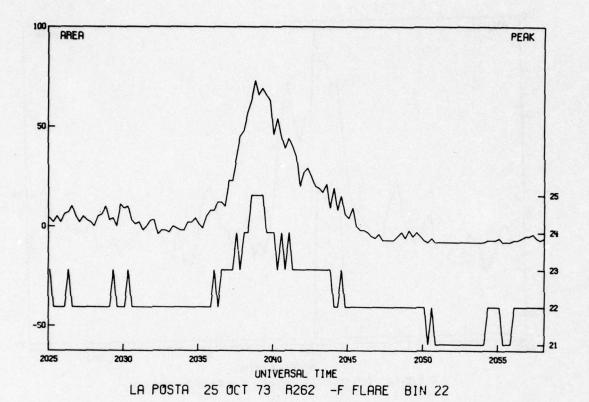


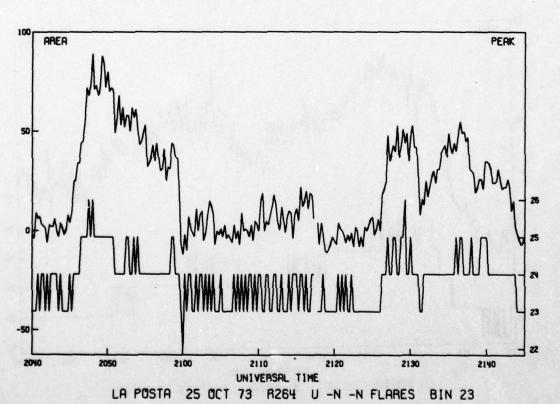


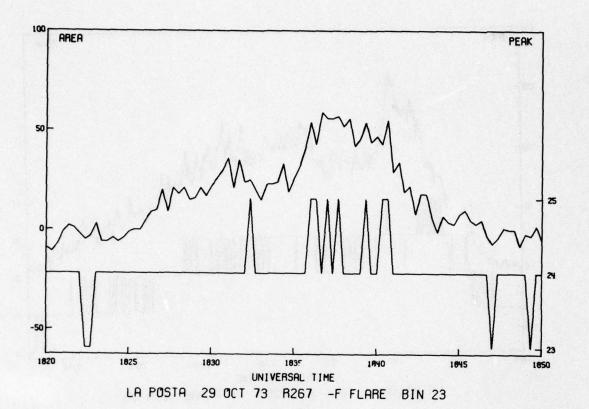


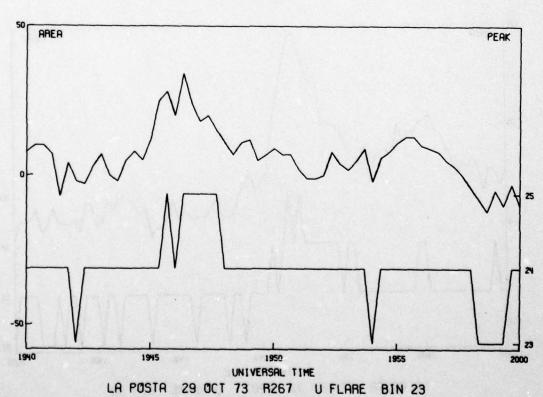


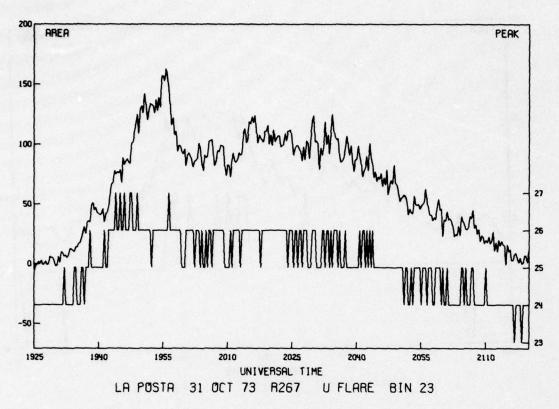


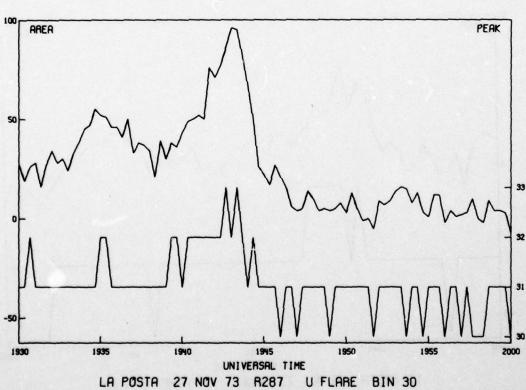


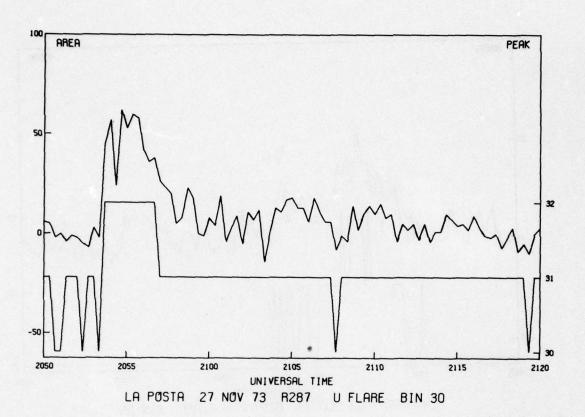


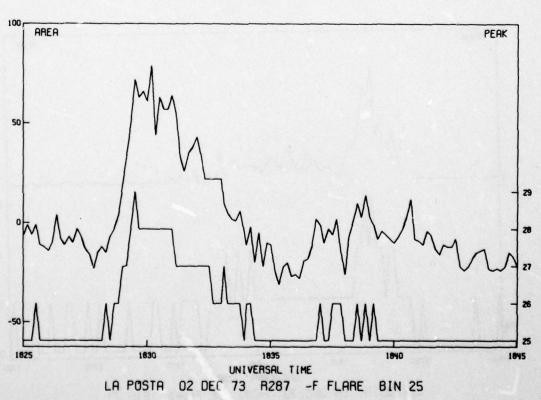


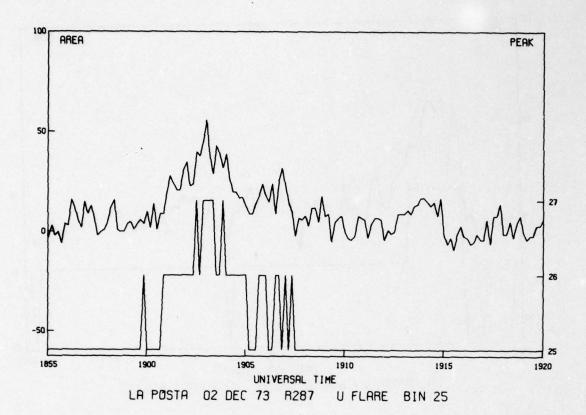


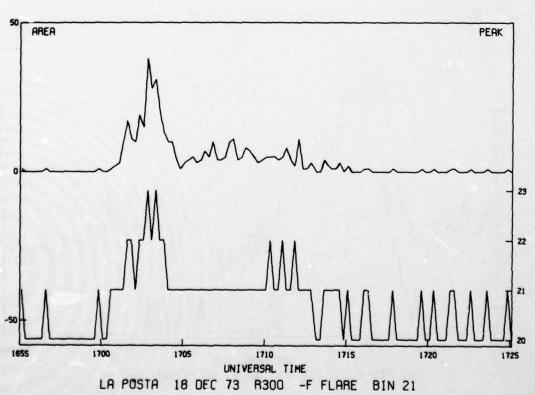












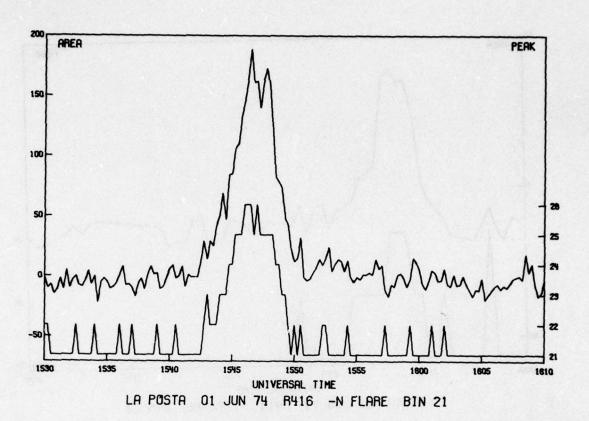
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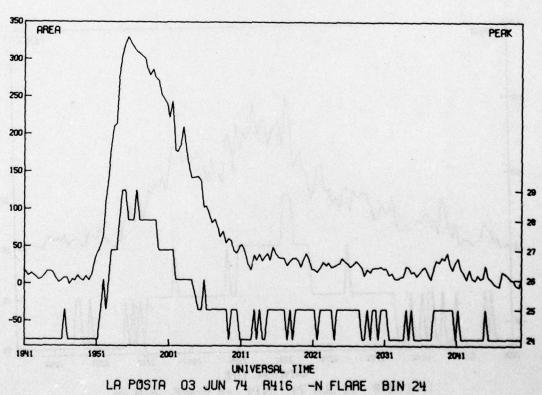
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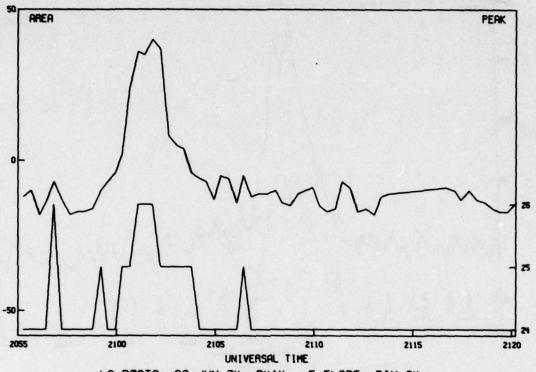
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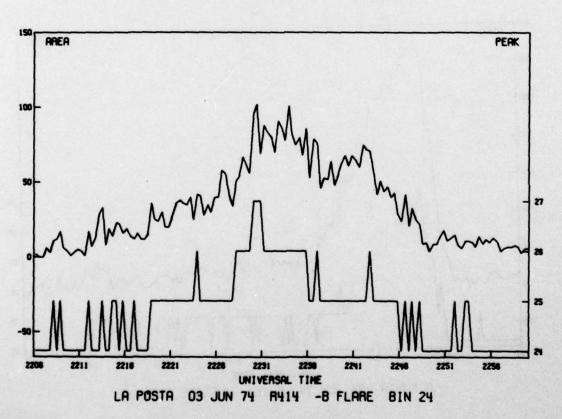
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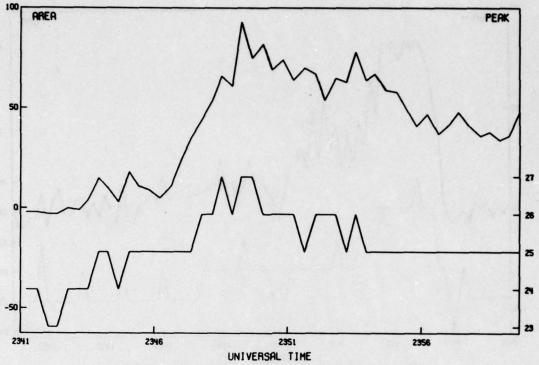




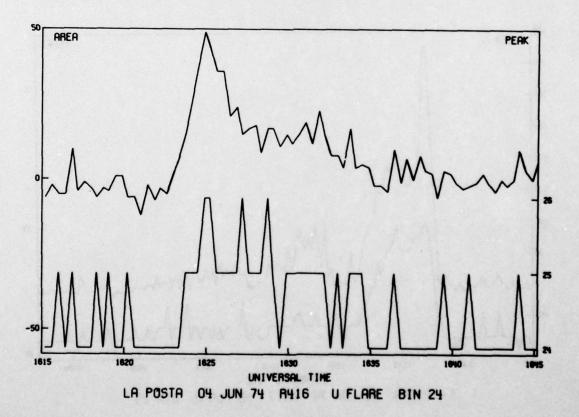
LA POSTA 03 JUN 74 R414 -F FLARE BIN 24

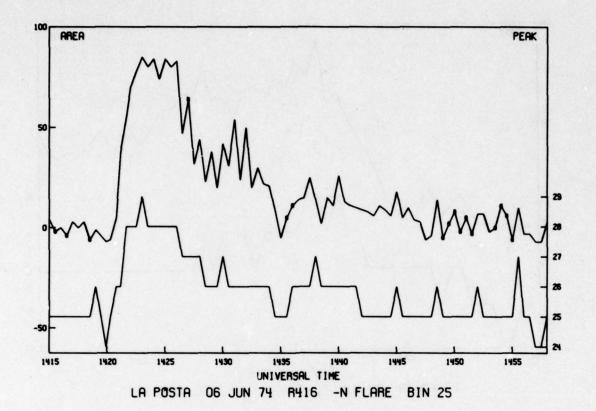


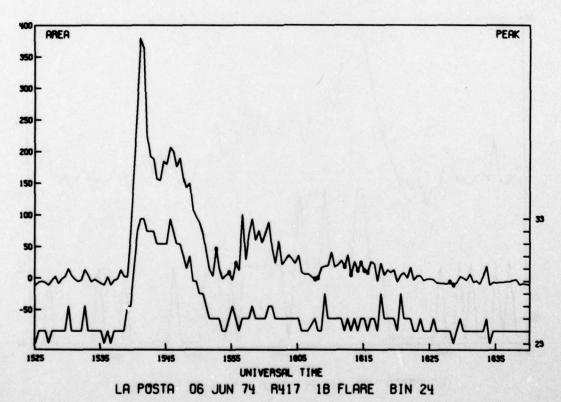
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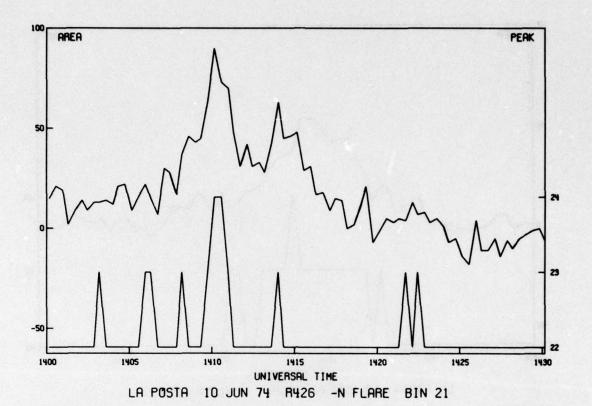


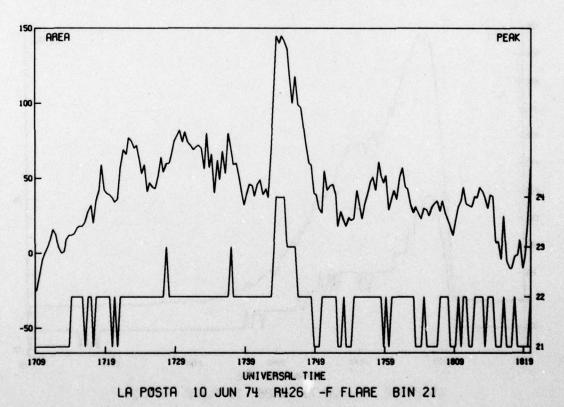
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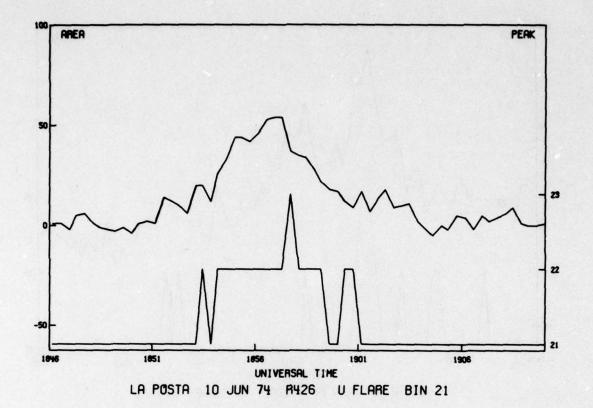


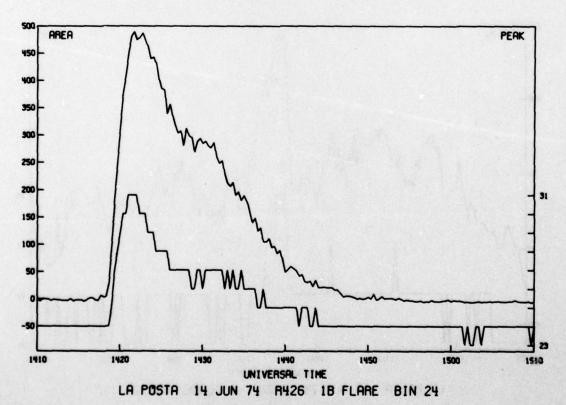


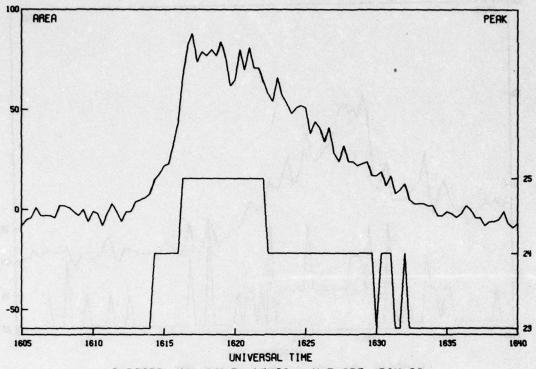


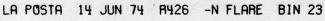


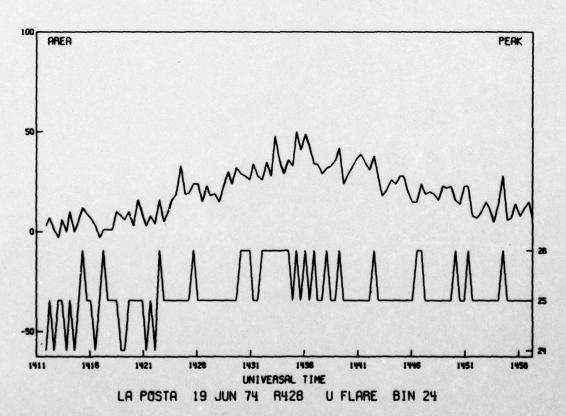


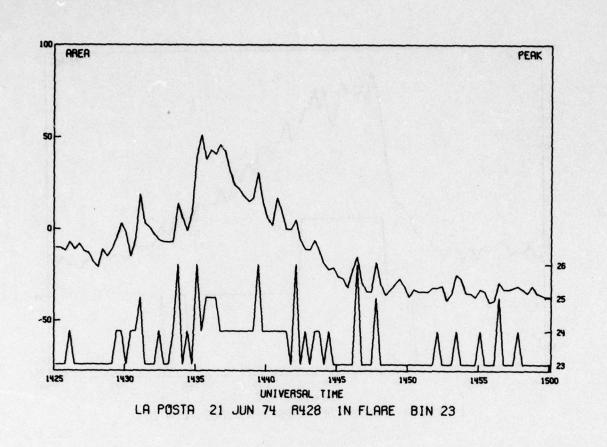












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